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Jephtha Sacrificing

and

Dinah

Two Dramatic Poems

By

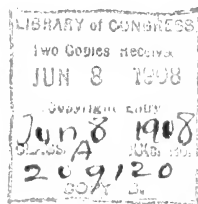
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JEPHTHA SACRIFICING

THE ARGUMENT

Jephtha, for his vow at setting forth to the conquest of the Ammonites, is constrained to offer his daughter in sacrifice. He consents, though not willingly, to the offering; but is openly opposed in this by his wife and secretly by others; yet, convinced that this is of God, he perseveres in his purpose to offer his daughter in sacrifice: Which accomplished, the drama concludes.

THE PERSONS

JEPHTHA

MIRIAM, daughter to
Jephtha

CHORUS of Elders of
Mizpeh

MARA, his wife

MESSENGER

SERVANT

The Scene: Before the house of Jephtha, in Mizpeh

JEPHTHA SACRIFICING

Jephtha. With certain feet and happy resolution
At length I come, in this ancestral spot,
Home to my country and my father's house.
O pleasant thoughts that swarming rush upon me
Of youthful years distressful, which have changed
In man's maturer life to other purpose,
Befitting well my birth of lineage high
And this high mission happily achieved;
Whence happier store of future I presage,
Thus glad returned, ancestral house and home!
With other hopes I left ye, other mind,
When, thrust from home inhospitably, I went
Wandering that barren region, where of old
Israel wandered; thither then compelled
Into the desert, where I long sojourned
With others of like sort, as head conjoined,
Earning my bread by violence enforced
Upon all travelers who passed that way—
At least the rich and proud; the poorer sort
I suffered to escape without annoy,
Or, pined by drouth and hunger, I relieved,
And to their need bestowed what I had reft,
Adding what I from others had enforced;
Whence they in joy departed and in peace,
Happy to scape thus quit. Nor all content
With such inglorious life, who wont to feel
Far otherwise in youth, with hopes inflamed
To highest actions, no less in their reach
Than freedom for my country, now oppressed
By enemies, that us environed round—
Not thus as all content here then I stayed
Till years were passed, and meditated much—
What also had my earlier years engaged—
To free my country from a cruel yoke,
But found no way, so sunk in bondage found
And servitude, their fittest punishment
Ingloriously who their True Strength forsook,

Thus fallen away to brutish idols foul.
Yet later came the lords of Mizpeh, pressed
By the fierce Ammonite who claimed the land
By ancient right secured, and threatened high
To thrust them forth, as I by them compelled.
Hence me they chose their leader, much dismayed
By dire compulsion, and confirmed their choice
Before the altar in the sacred grove
In presence of the oracle and priest—
Also by God confirmed; and from him given
Victory assured, strength from on high vouchsafed
Upon our enemy and fierce oppressor,
To overcome his brute tyrannic power
And rescue Israel from the Ammonite,
That proud insulting foe, who dared presume
Against the people of God, but soon discerned
Far otherwise, in broken flight dismayed,
With all his power infringed. For, parting soon,
I upon them dread execution wreaked
For disregarded right and broken faith,
Leaving them blank of joy and blank of boast,
Who in their arrogance had thus presumed
To assert themselves and gods over our own.
And now, from victory turned, I come to claim
That just desert to rule, my right assured
By our dread lords pronounced, secure in hopes,
And long in this fair land secure to dwell,
Of happiness assured, of peace, of joy.
But one doubt yet remains, lest that rash vow
Infatuate, which I took at setting forth,
Some danger draw, or trouble, which my days
Knew never until now. Yet why despair,
Or waver? Doubtless ill cannot befall
After such good received, fair premonition
And flattery to my hope, thus fair achieved.
But if the future aught of trouble hold,
Or danger, which the time hath yet concealed,
He, who hath guided still my steps aright,
Dispel it, as the darkness now the day.

Cho. Mighty the works of God,
And marvellous his wondrous ways,

That well his power declare, whose glorious deeds
Display his gracious favor shown divine!

Semi-Cho. Nor least, when came the river-dragon
proud
From Egypt after Israel, though sore tamed
By prodigies of portent, grievous signs
Afflictive, which his spirit compelled; but he,
Despite such wonders shown,
And wrath of God provoked,
By whom himself proudly he durst compare,
With rallied hopes perfidious elevate,
Hardened his heart, more hardened as by thaw
Obdurate ice, pursuing
Them in his anger whom his promise gave
To part in safety assured.
But him the sea withstood, and mustering fierce
On his embattled war,
As in despite his feigned omnipotence,
Swallowed him with his host,
And whelmed them in its waves.

Semi-cho. Nor otherwise, when Israel fought of old
In Joshua's conduct, and in sky stood still,
Midway in heaven, the sun,
And moon her wonted course adjourned,
The voice of man commanding, till his foes
Israel o'ercame.

Semi-cho. Nor less his power appeared, when Sisera's
might,
Presumptuous, fought to enslave
God's people chosen, and his deity like despised;
But, joined in battle fierce, learned other thoughts
And meaner hopes conceived,
Safety and peace in flight, which death denied.
For him the stars of heaven in fight withstood,
And Kishon's wave, that ancient river, rolled,
Swallowed them, when from heaven
Strange fire and direful hail and lightnings, mixed
With blackness and with tempest, fiercely fell
On that proud host confused,

And as in anger consumed
The fierce insulting foe,
Whom earth, opening her mouth, in aid devoured,
And whelmed their war.

Semi-cho. Nor lastly Chemosh, Ammon's fear obscene,
More dread or potent,
When he fondly matched
His fierce presumptuous might with Israel's God,
Whose arm of power displayed
Enforced hard vengeance,
When the strength of Israel pierced
Their utmost battle drawn;
Nor stayed, but spread the slaughtering pestilence
And the consuming sickness of the land,
Till twenty cities, of their country chief
Daughters esteemed, and prime,
From Aroer to Minnith's frontier plains,
Beneath the avenging force of war's dread stroke
Bowed captive, or, worse fate, ascended all
In flame and smoke to heaven.

Semi-cho. Thee, Jephtha, then I praise, unconquer-
able,
Mightiest, our first of men,
Whose prowest deeds performed,
Not less than thy prevailing argument,
Enforced the Ammonite in that hard contest
To flight or death.
Whence Minnith mourns,
And Aroer, with all that region round,
The battle's rued attempt and dire event,
That cost so many of their chiefest sons,
And quelled their pride.

Semi-cho. Where shall I first extol
Thy deeds and matchless might?
The wonder of thy nation, and the boast,
When on the Ammonite, our dreaded enemy,
Confusion fell and horrible dismay,
Erst undismayed, now reft, surprised, amazed,
When, as the lightning glimpse,
Under thy conduct Mizpeh's sons thrust forth

In fierce pursuing bands
Upon his dreadless ranks and broken war.

Cho. Yet softly; for behold where yonder comes
One as with grief surcharged and fraught with woe,
O'erburdened sore; for such his mien infers
Depressed and sad.
Whence in his look, fallen and damp, appears
Some recent grief, perhaps; or what imports
Sorrow at this glad time, when all rejoice?

Serv. Companions to this house, for such infer
Both your attendance and regardful mien,
Say if ye aught by sight or word have gained,
If gone from hence, or stayed, or harboring near,
Of both my master and your friend, great Jephtha?

Cho. Nothing we know in aught, by accident
Obtained, or purpose; hither only come
To greet our champion, wondering much to learn
Him gone we hoped to find. But now relate
Why thus with anxious inquiry thou comest
Asking of us, whom like intent hath brought?

Serv. Ah, friends, if truly told what grief I bear,
I fear lest evil words may wound too deep.

Cho. Set forth thy tidings, whatsoever gained,
Since grief withheld more pains than what imparted.

Serv. Look not for happy tidings, deemed perhaps,
Sequel of victory, as might befit
Glad issue of success in fair event;
Rather expect to hear the heaviest evil,
The most with grief, most sorrowful, that ever
Could have befallen us—nor less importing
Than harm of him by whom we stand, our champion
And first of men. For now great Jephtha, come
Home to his father's house, secure of joy,
And wished-for welcome waiting, passed the doors,
And scarcely yet had passed them, when behold
A horror! she, his daughter, first in view,
A bevy of fair maids accompanying

In dance, with charming song and chiming harp,
Met in the doors him entering, to greet
Her sire's rejoiced return. But he that sight
Far otherwise received, in pallid fear,
Stricken with terror. Backward he recoiled
And bowed and groaning shook, as bows and shakes
The forest oak with tempest; then essayed,
Sore-tossed with grief, and thrice in vain, to speak,
And thrice, despite of manly shame, burst forth
In tears and sighs—at last gained utterance thus:
Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me low,
And sore with grief hast troubled. I have sworn
To God; that fatal oath cannot recall,
Though it import no less than death to thee,
To me destruction, in thy loss destroyed.
But she returned: As thou hast sworn, perform;
Behold me. For thy honor and thy vow
Gladly I die, so offered; since to me
To die is as to live, for that dear sake
By which I now am living. Horror first
And horrid silence fell at what might mean,
With sorrow new and sudden grief so strange,
A speech so strange vouched with reply so strange;
But no long silence; for that direful vow,
All unremembered but for such event,
One spoke, with look askance, as much afraid;
And soon from mouth to mouth the rumor ran,
Yet ventured none aloud. Her maidens then,
Scarce from surprise revived, gave signs of grief.
But them she checked with gentle voice, and bade
None for her weep; and all who thronged the place
Spoke cheerfully to, both menial in the house,
Or free without, nor aught in face or voice
Gave sign of sorrow, only last withdrew
Into a chamber to await command,
Her father's ordering. Neither Jephtha stayed,
Thus desperate with grief and quite deject;
But rushing out of doors, sought only surcease
Of pain, in thoughts divided, sore distressed,
The saddest sight, most sorrowful, that ever
Man saw, most pitiful; nor since was seen
Of any; whence my mission to discern

His place and posture, whether thus distraught
He seek some violent way. But how shall end
This direful day, or how fall out the event,
None may surmise, and all despair to think.

Cho. Doubtful the ways of man,
And doubtfully his life ordained,
Though still with graces eminently given
And high perfections adorned,
Created fair, conformity divine.
For upon him God's purpose high appears
To good, as oft, yet soon with heavier hand
And altered face his weightier doom he sends,
With no respect, as seems,
To sufferings past grievous endured,
Or heavier yet inflictions.

Oft with distresses dire, or poverty,
Ambition's curb, depressed,
And maladies of grievous kinds,
Joint-racking agonies, or torturing qualms
Afflictive, wasting pestilence
And slaughtering famine, all consuming ills,
Till life is worse pronounced than death, that comes
The cure of all life's evil, and the balm.

If these escaped, perhaps by dire afflictions,
Within him or without, man's life oppressed;
Fell hate of kind, or worse ingratitude,
Fiercer than body's ill,
Madness of secret mind, presumption fond
Drawing the direful wrath of God,
All fiercest accidents
Which on man's spirits prey and inmost mind,
That life no less a burdenous weight becomes,
Till death, a glad relief, alike reprieves.

Yet some, ordained, by high election chosen
And solemn choice, escape
Those grievous ills of being,
Remote from all the anxious cares of life,
Fulfilled with bliss.
Not therefore praised as wholly good, nor banned
As wholly bane, this mortal lot; the end,
Doubtful, of all determines.

But see! for yonder, sought in haste,
Great Jephtha comes, as much depressed with grief
And spent with sorrow ; now, in halt,
Stands like a blasted pine, by thunder scathed,
Its beauty withered ; hither bends
His steps, as toward us bound ; with honor due
Prepare forthwith to receive him.

Jephtha. I heard the sound of voices, which the sense
Of hearing, gross with grief, forbade to know.

Cho. Let us approach. Jephtha, our country's boast,
Not mindless of thy sorrow are we met
By thy unlooked approach, if aught in words
To solace and console thee ; or if deeds,
Apt to thy malady, we may bring forth,
Thy comfort deemed, our better office found.

Jephtha. Ye see, O comrades, what a net of ills
Hath closed me round ; and, what my worst affliction,
Myself have drawn, myself the ruin caused.
Who but myself, in heedless arrogance,
Thus impiously and weakly hath brought on me
Both my own sorrow and my household's ruin ?
How shall I more look up, or lift my head,
Who have shipwrecked on pride and high presumption,
Thus heedless, wrecked my hopes whereon I built
Both my own glory and honor of my name,
And lastly drawn derision of my foes ?
How shall not all who hear pronounce me punished
Justly for that presumption which asserted
Myself secure of future, and fondly ruined
My fair desert ? How ill becomes me now
That honor high, to have received salute
Of judge in Israel ! Rather will all approve
The just reward (O folly !) of my weakness,
And on my name merited curses heap
With obloquy, yet rightly to my shame.

Cho. Despair not, Jephtha ; greater cause have all,
And disposition like, to ease thy burden,
Who from the fiery Ammonite hath delivered them

And raised them up to be once more a nation,
Though near destroyed, no less a mighty champion
And worthy no less fame and high desert
Than all who erst, in siege or foughten field,
Have borne the honor great and name of judge,
Barak and Othniel, Gideon, famous found.
Not then entire deject. Perhaps some way
May yet be found, though now thou deeply liest
In much despair (and reason, as thou seest)
Rightly to do thy vow, and still preserve
Thy daughter to thy life inviolate.

Jephtha. Urge me not thus; that way impiety lies,
And hate toward Heaven, with judgment worse pronounced.

The oath I swore, though rash, infatuate,
I will perform, as reason is, obeying
Heaven's purpose manifest to punish justly
My weak presumptuous sin, that sought my honor
Only, not God's. Other now to attempt
Would not escape my guilt nor slacken thus
What solemn contract binds to offer up
In sacrifice my daughter, rather draw
Not less a greater stroke on me, and her,
For whose dear loss I mourn, not more reprieve.

Cho. Consider, Jephtha, that in evil case
Thou stand this day, either to sacrifice
Thy daughter, which thy vow strictly enjoins,
Abhorred by all who hear, and thus thyself
(No less!) expose to calumny and hate,
The people's wrath; or else thou must forego
That predetermined oath and vow engaged,
With recompense upon thy head returned,
The will of Heaven. Reckon the greater evil,
To spill thy daughter's blood, which Heaven forbids,
Or else forego what thou to Heaven engaged'st
Unratified by counsel or by wisdom.
Hence thou hast need all circumspection use,
And we no less choice in advice; for thus
On what thou doest this day, or undone leavest,
The weight of all and all thy hope depends.

Jephtha. I cannot, friends, deny this vow, though
fondly
Before engaged, and to my sorrow fulfilled;
Nor can I deem, though all deplore the loss,
That any will oppose my weak attempt
To its fulfilling, sad though it be and hard,
Questioning thus my right of father had
To do what with my own my right assures.
But how shall I suffice thus to perform,
Or how again but to behold her face
Endure, with joy and rapture so oft beheld?
Whose hand but mine, or whose permissive will,
Shall destroy in her my own life, not deemed
Thus given to be destroyed? But right compels,
And justice, what I must, though loth, perform.

Cho. Thy daughter is thy daughter, and thy right
Thy right; do therefore with her as thou wilt.
None questions here thy power, and least do we;
But pondered if some better way found out
Both to fulfil and to escape thy vow
Grievous engaged, yet in thy power to do.
Sore must it be and hard, I bear thee witness,
To lose her fairest, since first the sons of earth
Saw the daughters of men that they were fair
None fairer; neither in the common way
Of death deplored, as by the will of Heaven
Removed, and mourned, but still the stain escaped
Of blood, which on thy hands if used must show
Not guiltless; nor thy loss pronounced alone,
Her death, but deemed the woeful fee of grief
Common to us and all who here inhabit.
And how art thou of courage found enough
To do this deed, the death of thy own child,
Horrid to hear, more horrible to see,
Much more, performed by thee, her source and head?

Jephtha. Alas, what now avail my hopes conceived,
Honor in Israel and name assured,
Which these high honors assure,
Already now achieved, thus chosen late
And judge ordained in Israel? How in my seed

Shall stand my nation blest,
If this repenting hand
Destroy my issue sole and single hope
Of all posterity? the bitter doom
By which my spirit depressed.

Why was that choice of head and captain laid
On me, not seeking, and assurance given
Of victory upon my enemies,
And thus achieved, my chiefest hope once deemed
And pathway to my good thus fair assured?
Yet now alas, forsaken
By God, abandoned, afflicted,
That yoke of woe, which I had reft
From off my nation,
I now must feel,
Who for my one default
Shall thus pay on that forfeit bad, adjudged
To my own act perverse;
Whence faintings of despair,
And swoonings of the spirit overcome
By fear of Heaven's defection.

Cho. Thy woes afflictive bring into my mind
How others famous else have like endured
Calamity; great Abraham first,
Most like to thee in trial, but his faith
Him saved; and others, patient Job
Thus memorable, who bore the utmost stroke
Of fortune ill; undaunted Gideon,
Though him ingratitude from those he freed,
At Succoth and the tower of Penuel,
Oppressed, and death of kindred.

Yet these through grievous woes deliverance won,
Or faith delivered; whence like hopeful lot
For thee my presage, tested thus,
By worst afflictions tried,
The high intent of Heaven to prove what means
He for himself ordains,
And rightly chosen thence, if haply found
Fit for his mighty purpose.

But now I see draw nigh,
With altered face disordered

And garb as discomposed,
The wonted signs of grief, thy wife,
Whose purpose here intends; upon her brow
A cloud of sorrow hangs, and in her look
Not found submission meek, as like resigned
With thee in purpose; but, if I read
Signs of regard aright, far opposite
Found to thy vow performed; consider well
How here thy purpose thou holdest.

Mara. With grief of heart and sorrow have I come,
Jephtha, to hear from thy own mouth what thou
Intend'st on her, our daughter; since report
Avers that for thy vow infatuate
Thou wilt exact in recompense her life
And us bereave our hope—not in my thoughts
That thou couldst thus determine, who hast held
Ever, and holdest still, thy daughter endeared.
Deny this rumor then, as right and meet,
And us relieve from grief, which but to think
Compels my spirit, doubtless thus as thine.
But, after question asked thus plain express,
Why keep'st thou silence guarded and constrained;
And why do these bend thus their questioning look
Only on thee, or stand with sorrowed mien,
Gazing upon each other without speech?

Jephtha. Would I could thus deny, and quite annul
Purpose of me supposed! How gladly rather
Would I lay down this life, thus spent with grief,
If by this laying down hers were relieved!
But that cannot avail, nor could our prayers,
Weak as our breath breathed forth against the wind;
Since truth and faith and vow engaged compel me
To do what yet in doing I abhor.

Mara. Then, if thou her shalt not enough regard,
Regard thy wife, even me, who suing come
To thee for mercy, whom the ties of love
Constrain to hear, and to consider well
What now thou doest, ere too late achieved
Thy own destruction and thy lasting shame

Surely esteemed, with hate of all drawn on thee,
Who hear thy deed. Should not my prayers avail,
Who brought her forth in pangs and travail sore
Whom now thou slayest? Harden not thus thy heart
Against my prayers, nor disregard my tears,
Which here thou seest, but esteem thy wife,
And grant this only to her proffered wish
Whom thou hast still professed loved and endeared.

Jephtha. Not as unwrought by sorrow have I refused,
And still refuse, thy entreaty, though refusal
Found hard, and doubly hard that purpose found;
For with myself I war, and half my heart
Aids thee, against my will. Yet I not well
Become myself or this authority
But late on me bestowed, if I should leave
To do what purposed right, with fond and partial
Feeling swayed thus, who should by judgment rule,
Not weakly by affection be o'ercome,
Or feeling, which with judgment have no place.
Hence, as before my plea, I still must plead
Necessity and truth and faith engaged,
Which thus compel me to a deed esteemed
Evil perhaps by thee, desirable
Not to myself, who still, though loth, must do.

Mara. I see the natural ties, that wont to bind,
In thee are slack, but those may still be found
That stronglier bind, authority, opinion
Of others, strong compulsive force that governs
Even him who rules. Me mayest thou disregard
As weak, and her, whom love should teach regard;
But popular will expressed and commonalty
Of thought in deeds put forth may well constrain thee
To some regard. Bethink thy office new,
In which the state of order settled yet
But little, with regard but little grown
And new authority, shall little stead
To succor or avail thee, once aroused
The people, who esteem thy daughter well;
Against their force stands not authority;
That bond may break in use, and weakly leave thee

Exposed to wrath of those who now revere.
Easily is the people overcome
By change against its idol, if too far
Presumption carried—thou no less in danger,
They in the present need and circumstance
Unmanageable, ungovernable, unquenchable.

Jephtha. I like esteem thy threats, thus idly vented,
Of people's vengeance wreaked, as once I weighed
Thy tears, of value less are they accounted.
Me they deter not, though its utmost wrath
The people wakes, my purpose once assured.
But other bonds there are thou hast not mentioned
Of honor, faith, obedience, religion,
And duty; these constrain, or should, much more
Than nature's, oft proved false. These still compel
Me to my vow performed; nor shall I slack
What bands on me constrain—so only find
All bands that bind relaxed, and that true fear,
Whereon stands government, no longer found.
This is true government, where he who rules
Serves whom he rules, and each one rules himself
By serving all; which is the highest good.
Desist thy purpose then, and me relieve
From importunity, which only worsens
What pain I feel. Though yet, despite of that,
Or worse that may be felt, I shall perform,
And to the score exact, my vow secured.

Mara. Speak not of truth and faith, if still that
purpose
Thou holdest, to deprive thy daughter life,
That vow presumptuous sworn. For how can faith
Or truth impel thee on, or vow enforce thee,
To do what law forbids? That great command,
Do thou no murder, how shalt thou escape,
If thou perform what God forbids express?
What monster art thou, what enormity
Of man, rather what worse than brutish beast,
Not man, if thy unfaithful faith impel thee
Basely to profit by thy daughter's death,
Like him the heathen feign devoured his children?

How shalt thou stand to all posterity
Defamed and pointed for a heinous crime
Inhuman, base pronounced; not less thy name
Than Cain's abhorred, who for his bloody deed
Heard the stern curse of God on him pronounced:
Thy brother's blood cries to me from the ground
For vengeance. Nor less thine than his the stain
Of hateful murder, odious to all time.

Jephtha. Forbear thy words! nor further thus provoke
My sorrow, already now enough provoked.
For should I, as I do, melt at thy grief
And sore affliction, what could that avail,
Or succor? Wrong sufficient have I done,
And must not greater add; for so should I
Not only not escape, nor her dear life
Reprieve, (which to reprieve my own I gladly
Would spare) with faith and vow basely profaned
Thus impiously and weakly, but meet far worse
Destruction, daughter of a broken oath.

Mara. Thou durst not thus, against the laws of nature
And laws of God, offer thy daughter's life
In base fulfilment of thy heinous vow
Fond, rash, infatuate, so but to add
The greater sin, thus in religion's name
To do what still by God express forbidden,
Except some madness fierce had seized thy mind,
Or worse depravity, which my intent
Shall be to master or defeat, preventing
This basest of all deeds, abominable,
Detestable, and gross, though thou to cloak
Thy wickedness adorn'st it with the name
Of honor, faith, obedience, and religion.

Jephtha. That way destruction lies, to gloze and
smooth
The laws of God to our especial need,
Made only in uprightness and in truth,
Thus, by fulfilling some and some denying
Fulfilment, to draw guilt of all commands
Broken and neglected, as thou now beholdest

In Israel, where God is not revered,
But Baal and Ashtoreth receive his honor
Whose strength Israel upholds; yet they, perverse,
Worship the works of their own hands in wood
And stone. Shall I weakly obey the flesh
That cries against this vow, or God consider,
Thus in that vow revered, or, worse than those
Who only Baal adore, and Ashtoreth,
The work only of men, worship myself
And corrupt flesh, thus full of lusts and sins?
The greater sin than yet in Israel known.

Mara. I saw how still thy circling pretense closed
In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy,
The wont of all who plead necessity
To basest deeds, and in that error do
Evil, that good may come, but find instead
That evil follows evil, offspring bad
Of parent ill, nor in its course disjoins
Or lessens, rather but increases still
The sum of evil found. Yet this thy plea,
Though wrong, but thou depravest it with the name
Of justice, truth, and right, so to escape
Shame on thyself of deeds by thee performed.
To please thy God thou doest it, that his glory
And praise may grow. But know zeal for thy God,
Consumes thy house; and Moloch is thy God,
That grisly monster, Ammon's vile pollution,
Whose horrid sacrifice of human blood,
Performed with timbrels loud, and parents' tears,
Whose children pass through fire, hath still provoked
Their ill who offer thus, and like the wrath
Of Israel's God, whom mercy rather pleases,
And care for life, by him bestowed, not thence
Lightly or easily, as thus, bereft.
Or dost thou then esteem thyself a god
To give or take away, as good appears,
The life thou gavest not? A base presumption,
An impious pretense, which thy words aver,
Yet more thy act, if thou, as I shall doubt,
Will venture to the utmost of thy vow.
Let mercy rather sway thee; and consider

That promises thus made in wanton mind,
Heedless and careless, do not firm constrain,
But worthily are broken, and no blame
Attached to him whose error fondly passed
What better wisdom breaks. Let this assure thee,
And thou the rather spare thy daughter's life
Thou gavest not, nor should take; and thus redeem
Thee from destruction, where thy purpose tends,
And me from grief relieve, who wretched plead.

Jephtha. Thou neither dost compel me by reproaches,
Nor by thy tears persuade, that I should leave
My purpose, which I still have firmly held,
Despite what yet of weight thou hast borne against;
Rather the more confirmed, the more I see
What argument thou choosest to oppose
My will, though sad, now fixed. Desist thy task
To alter, or subvert, or undermine,
My fast determination not to yield,
But still perform, that all in Israel
May see that some still rather choose to do
Right, though against desire, and still approve
To honor God, whom most have still dishonored
And disobeyed. Forbear thy purpose, then;
Thy labor is but lost, which now thou usest.

Mara. In all disputes with men the woman still
Obtains the worse, how fair her argument.

Jephtha. But not for lack of breath or stiff persistence
Of purpose; let this present instance witness.

Mara. Wilt thou then still perform, as now averring?

Jephtha. No less esteem; since plain by God enjoined.

Mara. Bethink thyself; this may invite thy ruin.

Jephtha. Bethink myself? my sense of justice rather
And mind's approval, conscience, duty, reason!
Canst thou esteem me so by grief compelled,
As honor to desert and inward peace,

Thus to excuse myself from task found irksome?
So to betray that trust by God enjoined
Of judge in Israel called, whose office given
Should rather me persuade to disregard
All claims of kindred, all the wonted bonds
Of friendship and affection, than to abuse
The power I have, what but to prostitute
My sacred honor basely to desire,
Mine or another's. No; my mind is fixed,
And all my powers are settled and assured
To do this deed, and to oppose thy plea
Thus specious, shallow, partial, irreligious,
Savoring of fear to man; which should I hear,
How should I not obey the voice of man,
God's disregarded, and he liked despised,
Dishonored, and displeased? Which thus I will not.

Mara. I thought to have won thee from thyself, and
gained
Advantage to her good. But now I find
That thou as dear esteem'st thy dastard life
As hers thou holdest cheap. But if avail
Community of life and neighborhood,
Or if the natural ties that join mankind
Shall in this region bide, thou may'st not yet
Exult entirely, nor I all despair;
Which now I go to prove, and think to find
Others, who no degree or nearness trace
In blood related, or affinity,
More faithful to those ties that birth begets
Than thou, who thus despisest nature's bond.

Cho. Despair not thus entire deliverance, Jephtha;
But rather think that God will find some way,
Accordant with his purpose, to relieve
The sad intent thou hast, colleaguely so
Mercy with justice joined, if thou prove faithful
And hold out firm, until enough performed
To show thy faith sufficient and obedience
Amplly expressed. Doubtless this favor high
God will vouchsafe at need, and free thee quite
From thy fond vow thou mad'st, thus unadvised,

With grievous end. Perhaps thy daughter's life
God will redeem, as once was Abraham's son's,
After this trial of thy faith, though sore,
And testing hard; be thou of equal trust.

Jephtha. By miracle he may; yet not presumed
Interposition thus will be vouchsafed,
As once to Abraham was, who sacrificed
His son to God, obeying that command,
Though hard and difficult; but faith delivered
And wrought escape unthought. Yet not to me
This mercy, since in me no faithfulness
Was found, or firm regard for truth, but lightness
Of soul impelled, and reckless disregard
Of law and right; this other found excuse
And vindication, since his trial had
And tested fortitude proved him sincere
To do the will of God, who him approved
And blest. But me no like desert shall find,
Since I myself provoked what loss I feel
Already, though in apprehension only;
Which I shall not escape, even fulfilled.

Cho. Consider, Jephtha, that in times past God
Hath for his people wonders wrought; what now
Forbids belief? His power and might we know
Are limitless, and still his purpose holds
To good, as ever, on his chosen people,
Of whom thee not the least I now account,
Not therefore last to be esteemed and honored
By God, who hath his gracious favor given
To thee, his servant great and judge ordained.
That special honor shown thee warrants well
Expectancy and hope; nor should'st thou waver,
Or faint, that God will to thy special honor
And in thy special need deliverance send;
Which would be to deny and doubt his power,
Or question and blaspheme his goodness still,
The Holy One of Israel and our God.

Jephtha. Not thus to me my anxious mind portends,
Though gladly hope would here subscribe belief.

The miracles thou mentionest wrought of old
Were for obedience, duty, faith, submission,
Not for unthinking disregard of God,
Denial of his right, and usurpation
In this great stead. No; I have sinned away
That grace, and now thus fond must never hope
Deliverance or relief; hopeless my evils,
Remediless, beyond all thought of cure.
Only remains that I repent sincere
My error and my crime, that have provoked
Justly thus punishment, and God absolve
(What can I less with right regard and truth?)
From blame and from dispraise, which all to me
Belong; to me, sole cause of all my ills.

Cho. I cannot like thy thoughts, that thus would limit
God's mercy or his power, deemed by some
Treasonable to him perhaps, distasteful, faithless,
Impious and disloyal; but to thee
Accord thy right of thought, attributing
All to thy faith sincere, and to thy conscience
Leave thee, to blame or to approve. But still
One doubt remains, if in thy single right
And of thy sole impulsion to perform
Deed so untoward well deemed. Perhaps the people,
Ever ungoverned, unmanageable, heady,
And most where use and custom thought infringed,
Will not conform, or suffer here thy purpose,
So strange esteemed. How wilt thou then come off,
Alone against them raging and provoked?
Perhaps some direful vengeance they may take
On thee, or quite in wrath defeat thy purpose
Once known, which well thy wife by this hath opened,
On thee, presumed to have aroused just ire
Of Heaven, and God's command impiously abused,
Thus fond. Bethink thee then whereon thou stand.

Jephtha. I held no purpose to consider greatly
Others' opinion had, with like regard
Despised both people's wrath and tried prevention,
My counsel once made sure. Where duty bids,
The good little esteem the weight attaching

To censure or approval, satisfied
With what deemed right performed. What then should I
Or fear or apprehend censure or reproach,
Or worse, if worse be tried, thus armed alike
With innocence and purity intended
Of purpose, though deemed perverse? Which this great
office

Might, if need were, and public service done,
Excuse or palliate, perhaps, in me
What thus in others not. But who so wise,
Counselled, discreet, principled, reasoned, wary,
As not advice regards, oft meets the ill
Which he would most avoid. The mind of man
Is ever prone to error, found no less
Fallible than human. Nor would I assert
Myself above my right, though here no question
Esteemed, debate. But lest a doubt remain
Either of my due right or valid oath,
I will abroad unto the lords, and seek
Whether, as now employs some minds in doubt,
Authority thus hold of father's right
And duty; thence assured, not much need fear
What men shall do or say, intent thus right.

Cho. Doubtful the works of God
And doubtfully his ways ordained,
Allotting oft contrary in his purpose
To what of right esteemed;
Esteemed by man, whose blinded counsel sees
Not wisely the event and purpose aimed;
Oft therefore sore perplexed with doubt if good
Triumph, or evil, distressed
With fear of ill victorious
And good o'ercome, as vanquished,
Yet in the end discerned what justice high
Guides all to good and benefit of man.

God had not else, except with taint of sin,
Not consonant with his purity avowed
And his high will decreed,
Permitted this heroic Gileadite,
Against our law express and God's declared,
To take his daughter's life,

Except that bond of strictest vow
Secured his faith, constrained
To serve some purpose best and highest end;
Though yet may he avert,
If in his mighty purpose
And counsel high ordained,
Such trial from his servant
And champion chosen express;
Though, if he else decree,
His purpose still shall vindicate his name.

But see! for yonder comes with tranquil step
Great Jephtha's daughter, beauteous well pronounced,
Fairest of woman born,
Though beauty last in her be seen,
Of soul all heavenly seeming,
Honor in her looks expressed, love in her mien,
Submissive, meek, and pure,
In every gesture dignity and peace;
By me and by all others justly shown
The best of daughters living.

Miriam. Elders and men of Mizpeh, I am come
Thus hastily, against what held perhaps
Custom and use in woman, unattended,
Because by some averred, and to me brought,
That counsel given, or influence, to prevent
Fulfilment of that vow by God enjoined
Upon my father; which my purpose holds
To accomplish, and from him all peril draw
From whom I have to live, so to discharge
Only my debt, as meet, and nature's bond.

Cho. Thy purpose well thy duteous love declares
And courage beyond thought in thee expressed
More than belief to woman's fear accords,
And custom. But perhaps, since not accomplished,
Averted yet that cruel lot, by me,
As by all others, justly held abhorred.
And now in time thou comest to share with us
What hope we have of favorable import
With good success to see thy free deliverance.
For with thy mother's asking wrought in counsel,

Thy father now is parted to the lords,
To find if any hope perhaps remain
To set thee free, and yet regard his vow
That claimed thy sacrifice. If these favorably
Advise to thy release (what can they else?)
Undoubtedly he will relent, and leave
His purpose, grievous, yet by him accounted
Compulsive. Hence no more thy thoughts afflict
With fear of death, but rather summon hope
(Hope still remains, that still remains to all),
Hope of thy safety, of deliverance,
In which all we, as fits, participate.

Miriam. Thy words are not ungrateful, and accord
With pleasant thoughts, yet reckoned prophecy
Untrue; since thoughts of life to me are sweet,
That life with manifold delights by me
Once hoped, with husband's love and children's given,
Nuptial endearments sweet, enjoyment fair
Bestowed; not hated, then, the life I leave,
Left willingly for whose dear sake I spare
All this of life, and life itself forego,
That he may well fulfil God's purpose high
In him expressed, and I his will in me;
My one desire and counsel sole approved.

Cho. Desire of life, and therewith life's delight,
Which every soul constrains, and therefore thee,
Thou canst forego, and rather dare to choose
Death, if to save thy honor. But perhaps
Thy honor not involved in this, as deemed.
Despair not utterly thy life confessed
To thee endeared, nor quite forego all hope
Of safety yet secured. Others have stood
In like ill case, and yet the worst escaped,
Through God's great sufferance for the faith of man;
Perhaps by miracle he may deliver
Thy life, and thee preserve, as Abraham's son
Once to his sire preserved, whom firm obedience
Delivered from the stain of crime performed,
His son's destruction, and at last reprieved
With blood of victim given. Despair not thou.

Miriam. He can, I grant, perform as thou maintainest,
To doubt which well were folly, or inquire;
His power, by frequent miracles averred,
Commanded nurture in the wilderness
For Israel wandering, so to spare their lives
And his high glory augment, his purpose great;
Manna from heaven rained down, and water gushed
From the dry rock; which mighty wonders shown,
With others more, attested well that path
By flights of angels ministrant attended.
And others, patriarchs, prophets, holy men
And women, have his power experienced like.
No question then of his omnipotence,
But his intent in this, if I shall scape
The death adjudged, or that strict vow fulfil.
Yet whether thus or no, I am resigned
To what by Heaven allotted; nor in this
Folly to God impute, nor blame to man;
None to myself, if I shall well endure
To bear his will in me performed, my purpose
And one intent. No other aim I seek
Than to fulfil God's purpose and intent
In me vouchsafed. Living or dying, I serve
His will who me created, if to this end,
The end is fair, and fair by me approved.

Cho. If God ordain his purpose high in this,
Question not thou his counsel. But perhaps
(Since mutable the ways and minds of men,
Erroneous oft, where right is most presumed)
God's counsel not in this. What if his purpose
Have not ordained this trial, but some error
Misleads thy father thus to his destruction,
And thy fond ruin—permitted him to bear
Awhile, to test his wisdom that now bears
Office of God on earth? Or else some madness,
Such as upon the wisest oft hath seized,
Delusive, vain, possess thy father's mind
Given o'er to folly? Then not well approved
His purpose or thy fond obedience found,
If he, belike through sin or unaware
Of his own deed, wreak thus upon his child

Some great enormity of crime, iniquity
Monstrous and horrid, not to be permitted
By those who have in charge the public good,
Thy good, as others. Here then be advised,
And well consider what thou here should'st do
Or suffer; since upon what thou determinest
Perhaps his welfare and thy life depend.

Miriam. Thy thoughts are plausible, yet not convince;
For God will not permit his servant chosen,
And high ordained, through sin impious to fall,
Or fall through error, which would question well
His goodness and his greatness both, denying
His deity or wisdom, to permit
Iniquity, or not avert. Those evil,
And they who purpose ill, are oft deluded
And given to error, that they may accomplish
Their own desert and doom. The good not so,
But guarded by his grace who them approves.
Not error then, or sin, or fond delusion,
Be mentioned here, but only God's high purpose
Himself to honor, and his servant prove
How faithful—I the lowly instrument
To manifest his will and honor high.
At least by his permissive will hath come
What now hath come; nor shall my wisdom deem,
Thus fallible, to question his intent
And ordered purpose; wise are all his ways.

Cho. Bethink thee what of pain in death thou feelest,
Nor thyself only, but thy mother, wrought
With woe, while here she stood, and much distressed;
Thy father, too, after his vow performed,
Will miss thee, and deplore, if not repent,
His rash, infatuate deed, only too late.
The present still is thine in which to work
Deliverance for thyself and them and all
From stain of crime, from sorrow, from affliction.
Consider, then, what means thou usest here
To work thy safe release, and that of all.

Miriam. Dishonorably myself should I esteem,

If, wrought by pain or dread, I should herein
Waver weakly for parents' love, or tears,
Or aught more dear esteemed—so to escape
Death, a less ill, the greater ruin invoked
Upon myself and them; thence justly punished
By direful stroke of wrath, tortured the more
With sense of weak apostasy from right,
Knowing my duty, but I did it not.
For death is not the greatest ill, nor pain,
Nor to the virtuous mind brings greatest fear;
But to approve the best, and thence pursue
Weakly the worst, is perfect misery,
Both to behold and to endure; thence not
By me to be beheld, or, worse, endured.

Cho. Yet stay; for yonder now thy mother comes,
A train accompanying; whose purpose here,
If friendly or adverse, still undetermined,
Since not in look or act declared. Though what
Intended the event will soon disclose.

Mara. With purposed resolution have I come,
Daughter, with these thou seest, thy comrades dear,
To win thee to thy good, and to persuade
What nearly to thy safe concern pertains,
That from thy father's purpose to thee known
Thou may'st escape, and quite redeem thy life
Thus from destruction, that now threatens thee,
And me no less in thy dear loss destroyed.
For in thee lives my life, and by that bond
Part of myself I feel thee and thee own
My dearest loss; nor ever will remove
The smart I feel, thou parting, and the pain.
What hinders, then, since now all things conspire,
The place, thy father absent, these thy friends,
And opportune occasion, to redeem thee
From death, and us relieve, who anguish feel
Not less than thine; which thine is now to ease.

Miriam. Thou mayest not thus persuade me to thy
purpose
Against what just and right by me esteemed,

Contrary to God's will and his divulged,
My father's; whom this act would give defiance,
And like in me compel from truth and goodness
What counsel I have held. Not thus by me
Shall that strict vow be thwarted, though deemed hard
And sad; my purpose otherwise is fixed,
If by the life thou thus would'st save (yet vainly
Would'st thou attempt the trial now) I may
Avail perhaps to save my father's vow.
From this declared intent seek not to draw me.

Mara. Consider, daughter, that none here disputes
The rashness of that vow, sworn impiously
And hence not binding—least of all on thee
Who didst not then consent; that false engagement
On thee can have no power, nor compel thee
Against thy life; better such promise broken,
That against God's due law and man's conflicts,
Thus kept, with end so direful; and perhaps
Some trial of thy father's faith designed
By God it may appear; or else, since thus
To reason opposed, some madness urges on
Thy father to this deed; from whence on thee
Can be no right in honor and obedience
To him, thus seized with error, and perverse;
But rather right and reason both conjoin
That thou defeat thy father's purpose, deemed
Madness, or worse impiety, and him
Relieve from stain of guilt for vow performed.

Miriam. Thou dost not yet avail to move my purpose
Of faith and firm obedience to my God
And to my father; nor wilt thou o'erbear,
More than thou now o'erbearest, that I leave
My firm determination not to yield,
Or seek to save my life, thus jeopardized
For him to whom my life is owed, my father
And head. Desist as useless, then, thy purpose.

Mara. A father's right thou mentionest, but thou
feel'st not
What place in thee thy mother has. Shall I,

Who bore thee with sore pains, not find thy duty
Also appear to me, as to thy father?
Not his entire thy duty and thy love,
But also mine, where now thou disregardest
To me both duty and love, where most is owed.
Let tender love to me constrain thee, then,
That to my asking thou be not opposed,
But yield my due, as right, approving thus
What debt to me thou owest, as nature bids

Miriam. Not that I love thee not, nor lack the bonds
That nature draws, have I refused thy asking;
But duty and respect, more valid plea
And more on me constraining, have compelled me
Hither to this purpose. God and nature bid
That I, who to my father owe my life,
For him should yield it, when occasion needs,
As now. Not then through disobedience drawn,
Or lacking in respect to thee, adjudge me,
That thus I still refuse thee, though still loth.

Mara. Bethink thee here; that way thy ruin lies.

Miriam. Yet still in this I persevere, as right.

Mara. Then, if persuasion win thee not, let win thee
What more avails, compulsion, since to reason
Thy ear is closed; thou seest my company
Assembled to o'erbear, if thou opposed,
As now thou hast. If thus thou wilt refuse
To save thy life, when opportunity
Invites, as now, if life thus cheap be held
By thee, but not by us now here assembled,
Some means are here to save thee from thyself
To us against thy will, our present purpose
Not to be overborne or now gainsaid.

Miriam. If reverence for authority avail,
Or aught respect and right regard for law,
Ye will desist your purpose, thus avowed
And now enforced, against my will declared
Thus purposed; or if these, as seems, avail not,
Perhaps against your purpose may oppose
Aught stronger than ye have, of more persuasion,

Since force o'er force prevails when reason not.
For these who present stand, my father's comrades
And friends, will not, I think, withhold their aid,
As not before, nor their obedience now,
Most needed; whom I here appeal to save
This wrong to law presumed thus violate.

Cho. Withhold thy purpose here; nor thus enforce
Against authority, but better learn
Respect to those that rule, as right, obeying
Thy husband, as in all things, so in this.

Mara. I thought to have gained my purpose, but have
failed,
Due to thy folly that refused my aid
Thus offered, against what deemed reasonable;
And reason is in all, yet not in thee.
But thou wouldst die; die, then, if thou preferest
Death to thy life. And thou in this art found
Like daughter to like father, obstinate
In purpose fond. Yet think not I shall bid
Farewell, or mourn thee; rather disavow
As of my kin one so pernicious found
To her destruction; whom my disregard
Shall visit, not my curse, found thus unworthy
All notice, thus insensate, rash, and fond.

Cho. Thrice happy he, with love of offspring given,
Founded in nature, pure,
Informed with goodliness, with honor due
Bestowed to parents, which most honor is,
Inclined to virtue,
Faithful, to good submit;
Him happy thus, thrice blest, grief may not bend
With sorrow down, nor pain consume his life,
Thus anguished, blasted, dread, lamentable,
But death shall gently pluck
In ripe old age mature.

But whom ungrateful children curse, to ill
Inclined, to mischief bent,
Honoring not good, irreverent, arrogant,
Of duty scant, thrice miserable he,

Loveless and unendeared, thus desolate,
Unhappy, vexed, importuned
With grief, to sorrow devote,
Thus pierced with inward thorns, by ruin o'erwhelmed
In crude old age oppressed;
For they will do him evil and not good
All the days of his life.

But stay; for now thy father comes
With steps not light, yet firm in look
As who resolved on right,
Though painful; whom the less to grieve
Do thou receive assured; while we no less
Assay to lighten what he bears of grief.

Jephtha. I have, although their judge, besought the
lords

Wherever found by search, or chanced upon,
To express opinion of my deed, this offering;
Not that I aught misdoubted my intent,
But only to confirm belief I had
In this by God compelled, by him constrained.
None much opposed I found, and most approved,
Averting that, since now the vow engaged,
Only offense to God must be entailed
If I from this great entering now draw back,
Impious and fond, thus thwart to his great purpose;
From which inferred that sole impiety,
Sole disobedience, could prevent thy offering,
Thus sore to me, distasteful and abhorrent.
For though sons yet to me were born, and more
Daughters besides, yet dearest loss of thee
Would never from me, such the pain I feel,
Thou parting; nor that sorrow ever ceased;
Since joy without thee found were found no joy.
Hither then am I come, not much in hope
Or heart to seek thee whom I here now find,
Not gladly, but with sorrow rather felt,
To do, although upon this purpose fixed
Steadfastly what I yet shall most abhor.

Miriam. Nor find'st thou me unready, unprepared,
Father, from whom I spring, and trust to show

My deeds approve that boast. Farewells are said
Sufficient, since in them no solace found,
But sorrow felt and uttermost distress.
And nothing now remains but to be offered,
Thy surety, which for thee I gladly endure.

Jephtha. Delay; while hence I part and see prepared
All needful things, and summon all my house
And all my kindred, that the deed performed
All vouch, and own by me discharged entire
That compact hard, which yet I must accomplish.

Cho. Thou seest the hour approaching nearly now
That brings thy last of life; and what for thee
In comfort or in counsel may we offer
To ease thy burdenous load, or lighten aught
The weight of all thy sorrow, and the pain?

Miriam. O happy days, which I shall never see,
Happier, far happier, had I never been!
Then would I not be thus exiled from life,
Untimely, unprepared! Never must I
Behold the life I thought, nor see my years
Lengthening in peace, begirt with issue dear,
Brave sons and goodly daughters, whom I hoped
To bear and rear, and in them live my life;
But I must die untimely in my youth
For whom I most would live, both to enjoy
And by them be enjoyed, my parents dear.

Cho. Parents are used to spare all for their children,
The course of nature bid, to gain increase;
Thou for thy parents bent to give thy utmost,
Made needful to redeem thy father's vow.

Miriam. O thoughts, which I again must never hold,
Of life, sweet in itself, but doubly thus,
Endeared with love of kindred, and with love
Destined of husband blest and children dear!
Me not old age, after full length of days
Fulfilled with honor, love, and life's delight,
Shall pluck, nor I mature fall in the lap
Of earth, the common mother of us all;

No home, nor friendly household hearth, where I
Might sit with reverence girt, with peace, with joy,
Must be my lot, but I in life's fair spring
Shall go to joyless death, and bid farewell
To life and life's delight, now doubly dear.
Thee, lastly, spousal bed, whereon I ne'er
Shall lie, nor ever know nuptial embrace,
But childless shall I die; nor ever feel
The tread of infant feet upon my breast,
Nor the sweet pain of childbirth; but shall die
Unwed; nor ever know that hope fulfilled,
Mother in Israel from whom should spring
That saviour, who shall set his people free.

Cho. Give not to utter woe, but well bethink thee
That in good case thou diest, not honored less,
But more esteemed and revered, though thy years
Reached the full span of life; by all accounted
Among those faithful women who have cherished
Their country's welfare deemed above their own.
And name thou hast secure, not less renowned
Than Ruth or Deborah, famous to all time.
But yonder now for all due rites performed
Thy father comes, a train accompanying
Of all our best esteemed, the choice and prime,
To do thy rites meet reverence, as befits.

Jephtha. With tardy feet and lagging resolution.
Daughter, I come, to do what still remains,
Thy sacrifice, which I would gladlier stead
With my own life. But that could not avail,
Or benefit, but only worse draw down
The vengeful ire of Heaven; though, if prayers
Would aught avert, I long ere this had won
Reprieve for thee, for me a glad release
Of what in apprehension felt till now,
Yet now in sad reality soon known.
But come; for now the hour precise arrives
To offer thee, if now God's purpose hold
Thus toward thy sacrifice; or, if he will
Interposition, to prevent thy offering
Such means will not be wanting, but at hand.

Cho. Delay; since I perceive thy wife, as bent
On haste, this way approaching; for her coming
Defer departure, till her purpose gained.

Mara. With altered purpose, Jephtha, have I come,
Though sorrowing much, nor longer will oppose
Thy sad determination, sad to me
As to thyself. Bitter reproaches hard
Have I heaped on thee, which I now abjure,
And now withdraw that curse, then much enforced
By mother's love, and much compelled with thoughts
Then held so direful. Yet not me expect
To attend the deed; thus far my spirit can,
But no more; to behold my daughter's death
Would draw my own—no benefit esteemed
To her or me—and doubly thee bereave,
In this enough bereaved. Here will I take
Farewell, daughter, of thee, whom I had hopes
One day to see espoused, and worthily,
And offspring born to thee, also my joy;
Fond hopes, alas, conceived, without fruition,
Destined to end in empty expectation;
For now thou art espoused to barren death.

Miriam. Thy flattering hopes with cause I also shared,
But must no more. Farewells by me are said,
Except to thee, which now the last I bid;
For I shall shortly go that way, whence I
Ne'er shall return, and be with them that rest.
But come; let us no more delay; for me
To die is as to live, if God's high will
Demand that sacrifice. Though life be sweet
And hath delights, yet this delight is chief,
That God shall find fulfilled in thee express
His purpose predecreed, thou thine in me.
Living or dying, then, that thou obey
Him as I thee, esteem the greatest good
And best, and in us both, as now, fulfilled.

Jephtha. Elders and friends, farewell. Your company
I will not ask, but wish your presence here
Upon this place. Comfort and cheer my wife

With what of comfort is; speak her but fair
And reasonably, if need of speech be found
For solace given. Bitter hath been this day,
And grievous; the event remains with God.

Cho. Wise he, who from above
Hath wisdom given him well to moderate
His soul, and reason guide! Him not, perplexed
And drawn from right and path of fairest truth
By folly, from wisdom enticed,
Shall ruin bechance unthought, nor on his steps
Unfeared destruction light;
Not found confused, but smooth
His way to virtue, thus escaped
His own ruin invoked,
With sight internal clear,
And from presumption fond,
The grossest evil that walks, escaped secure.

But whom delusion and folly have possessed,
Thus drawn to evil counsel
And wrought to ruin depraved,
Incautious, fond, insensate,
With darkness internal struck—
What voyage but must needs result in wrack
With folly, ruin's steersmate, at the helm?

For me, may I not pass with impious foot
The sacred bounds ordained
Which God of old had set to right;
Ne'er may transgression's net enclose my steps
Found in forbidden place abjured;
Nor let my due feet fail
From wisdom's studious paths;
So shall I scape o'erweening pride,
That works confusion dire
And each best thing perverts to basest use.

So let not God impute his servant folly,
The mirror of his state and imaged might;
Rather his labors view calamitous,
And turn his toils to hopeful end.

But yonder now approaches, as in haste,
Who can relate what tidings wished,
As present on that place;

For thus his look infers,
From question cleared; and tidings borne
Speak in his face assured before disclosed.
Say, therefore, freely on; but first pronounce
If glad or sorrowful the news thou bringest.

Messenger. Both glad and sorrowful; the former
more.

Cho. Set forth then what thou hast in full relation,
While we attend; thou seest our thirst to know.

Messenger. Desire constrained me from that spectacle
Not to be absent, though dejecting much
To see so mournful sight, our mighty champion
Submitted to such trial, and his daughter,
Our pride of beauty and goodness well esteemed,
Seized by so violent death. With others more
That solemn moved in stately troop, I came,
Captains and counsellors, lords, ladies, held
Our choice in honor and the flower, not only
Of Mizpeh, but this neighboring region round
(So wide the rumor sad by this had spread),
Who flocked to see, not idly, nor as curious,
But to assure respect and sympathy
For both whom love of all in this possessed.
The place was open plain, where all might see,
Whatever sort attended, great and high
In office, or found lesser, civil freedmen
Gathered from town and city nigh, or menial
Of service found, whom love of these constrained
To this sad spectacle and solemn rite.
Within the open space an altar stood,
Of random stones upreared, virgin of use,
With needful things prepared for sacrifice.
Thither was Miriam brought, and thither came
Her father, Jephtha; while with solemn mien
And reverent action ranged the lords around,
That with their presence dignified the scene;
Behind these next the crowd, rank beyond rank
In ordered circles drawn. Before the altar
Great Jephtha stood, with hands uplift, and prayed:

If this to God displeasing, be some sign
To warn vouchsafed, or other victim given,
To purge my sin for vow if unperformed.
Then to his daughter turned: Dear daughter, thou
Pardon this deed I do; nor on me charge
What guilt, if any, that I take thy life.
Whereat, with eyes uplift, as one who prayed,
She answered: Freely I forgive thee, father,
Who, as in all things, doest only right
In this; far from thee be all thought of blame.
This said, he kissed his daughter and with tears
Fondly embraced, much won that she could choose
To bear all things for his dear sake, even death.
Nor she him less returned, and also wept,
Not sorrowful, but smiling as with joy;
Then thus resumed: Let not my limbs be bound,
Nor bind my eyes, but let me freely go,
Thus seeing all, and seen, because I die,
Freely, father, for thee, for whom to die
Is joy, not pain; nor any blame be charged
For this to thee or me, nor punishment.
So saying, she stepped before the altar, and stood
With upward eyes in prayer; then turned unmoved,
In firm composure fixed, unpaled with ill,
Awaiting what her sire might next perform,
And darts of pity from all eyes received
Into her sight of those who mourning gazed,
Compassioning her end. And he forthwith,
The knife in hand upraised, beside her stept;
Nor would avert his face nor turn his eyes,
That aught of pain escaped, or punishment,
But fixed in steadfast gaze, with constant face,
Drove the knife in her side up to the hilt;
Then placed upon the pyre and touched the flame
That swift with nimble glance the whole consumed.
The assembly soon dispersed; nor Jephtha stayed
After his vow performed, but parted straight;
And now approaches yonder to this place.

Jephtha. Elders and men of Mizpeh, not by me
Recital needs of what but late performed,
Since now perceived that tidings to you came,

Before my presence, of what seemly done,
Both well pronounced and fair; and God in this
Honored, as in all else; nor of me questioned
On whom all blame alights. But that is past;
Only remains that God's great will be wrought
In all else that remains, as done in this
By me, with patience armed and faith to bear
Whatever lot, and strong with fortitude
Not weakly to relax what powers I have,
But still exert for honor to his name,
Who will with strength uphold and me enable,
My purpose hence and counsel sole assured.

Cho. Doubtful and dark the ways of God,
And undiscerned his high intent;
Evil to men appearing oft;
Yet in the close agreeing well
With his great purpose; whence, though mourned,
His servants wise his works pronounce
And fair, befitting his great end.

DINAH

THE ARGUMENT

Dinah, daughter to Jacob, after her ravishment by Shechem, son of Hamor, prince of Shalem, comes forth at morning with purpose to take her life. She is discovered by some maiden attendants, making the chorus, who endeavor to dissuade her what they can. Next enters her mother, Leah, who seeks Dinah's consent for the latter's marriage to Shechem; which Dinah refuses at first, but later is prevailed upon to permit. Dinah is next visited by her brothers, to whom she makes recourse for aid. They promise to endeavor revenge of her quarrel. Her father, Jacob, then enters with Shechem, who tries to persuade her to the marriage. She refuses at first, mindful of her brothers' injunction of feigned unwillingness; but, after some discourse, consents, and departs toward the city with Shechem. After her departure, Jacob bewails his misfortune; whom the chorus seek to comfort, telling him of his sons' promised endeavor to requite the injury. He, in anger at their disobedience, thinks to depart and warn the Shechemites of their peril; but is prevented by the appearance of a servant, who relates what hath happened in the city, namely, the slaughter of the men of Shalem by Simeon and Levi. These now appear; are reproached by their father for their faith-breach; but excuse themselves under pretext of their sister's wrong; wherewith the drama concludes.

THE PERSONS

DINAH

JACOB, her father.

LEVI, son to Jacob.

LEAH, her mother.

SHECHEM.

SIMEON, son to Jacob.

SERVANT.

CHORUS of maiden attendants.

THE SCENE, near the tents of Jacob, before Shalem.

DINAH

Dinah. O swarming thoughts, that wakened rush upon
me,

Tormenting, as with stings of hornets armed!
Which bring to mind what happy state I lost,
Of purity, of maiden innocence
Bereft, deflowered, and all my virgin awe
Rent from me, that uncovers thus my shame;
And I bereaved, all disadvantaged found,
Alas, what was my all, yet him that seized
Enriched not more, but poorer left with blame
Of maiden innocence and honor wronged!
O, wherefore did my parents bring me forth
And thence with care uprear me—to such end
Abominable, detested, fraught with shame
Unquenchable, that burns me as with flame,
When in that dark and lecherous place I found
Alas, what hath no name, which yet I feel,
Sleeping or waking, thus with ruin harmed?
Why did I walk that day thus forth alone,
And thence that evil draw, my dearest grief,
Which brought on me what sorrow I possess,
What hatred, what contempt, what utter shame
Of mine own self, when I—scarce three days past—
Went forth to see the daughters of this land,
And in their city, where I caught my hurt,
Lost all my maiden virtue, all my peace,
Leaving me blank of honor, blank of good,
My harsh undoing, which I know not well
Shall end me, or shall spare? O shameful blot
Of virgin purity and virtue wronged!
Indignity the vilest that might fall,
Without all hope of change, to curse this life—
Both what now is and that which is to come!
Since now I bear such miseries as well

Might task my life to weep. O, worse than death,
Torment, or hunger, or aught other ill
That human life contains! While he, who thus
Hath wrecked me, smiles away my maiden blame,
Boasting his cunning and accursed guile
That hath forced ope the casket of my honor
And set my virgin treasures forth to scorn.
Whence death I now invoke—yet why? to me,
Thus quick or dead, incorporate found with shame,
No glad release, though wont the captive freed
By death, his surest friend and dearest aid,
From sorrows all discharged, from fear, from woe.
But me no wished reprieve shall find,
Thus captive to the worst of wrongs,
That night is friendlier found than day,
Which wakes me to the sense of bitter woe
With stinging thoughts, that goad along my mind;
Though night may medicine not thus my grief,
That I all pains forego—since even in dreams
I see the ravisher approaching on
To seize me, and once more my flesh pollute
With loathly foul embrace and touch of shame.
The day to me is dark
And silent as the gloom
When light forsakes the sky,
Hid in her nightly cave!—
Such miseries threaten dire,
Thronging upon me, numberless, confused,
With horror, blanking out the hopeful light,
As in the press and thrust of the night-storm
When atom snow falls through the atom dark.
But let me not forget what brings me forth,
Escaped their watch whose vigilance I shun,
That purpose to seek out some violent end
And desperate death; which my own hand shall wreak,
Avenging me this worst of pains and wrongs.
Which than I had received, better had I
Never beheld the bright face of the sun,
But never been, unknowing life and light—
As an abortive birth untimely dead
Or ere I saw the day!
Then would I not be banished thus to shame,

As to the land of death, though yet in life,
The land of darkness and the shades of death,
A life of living death, yet not exempt
From burial in life,
Entombed in living shame.
But stay; for now I hear the tread of feet
Hasting this way their steps—and thence perhaps
Of my pursuers, me now come to find
And stare upon my wrongs, to spite me more.
Whose presence feared I shun, and hide me thus,
That I may thence conceal me from their shame.

Cho. Where, where is she? mindful the while!
Lest now, through uncouth haste,
Harshly we break in upon her,
Disordering more her thoughts, in saddest plight
Thus changed, beyond belief and all report
Languished, apart withdrawn,
Abandoned all by hope,
In sordid habit of sad thoughts, only perchance
Not all outworn from life.

Or was it she whom thus we marked,
Our flower of beauty once and fairest pride,
Yet now by ruin deflowered,
Of all thy virtue reft, thy good, thy peace,
Humbled to act impure by lustful play,
That hath offended thy fair maiden awe
And rent thy virgin veil,
Though late in stainless purity thou grewest,
With choicest care upreared, and nurture sweet
Bestowed, as a fair flower
Select in choice and sacred.

Was it for this thy mother brought thee forth
And cherished from the womb,
Till in her careful eye
Thou stood'st her nursling sweet and choice delight,
Whom she had thoughts one day to see espoused,
And strow the bridal bed for thee, a bride
Yielded with sweet submission, coy delight,
To him, thy first of men?
Yet thee a bed unhop'd thy mother dews

With tears and misty sighs
Dropped from her cloudy years.

How may I well bewail
The hard mischance thou bearest,
Misery of miseries, the top and crown
Of human ills, which thee hath wrought to woe,
A prisoner now to shame, in bonds to grief,
Such ruined life thou hast, abhorred and scorned.
For thee I reckon abject in estate,
With sorrows undeserved
And vile contempt befallen,
Under all insult whelmed,
That grief herself might grieve,
Though late in honor high thou stood'st,
Universally known with fairest graces.

Dinah. Ay me!

Cho. But stay! for now I hear
Her sorrowed plaint whom thus we seek;
And yonder from her place
Discern her coming, whom befits to cheer
With healing sympathy, if lightened aught
Her burdenous load of suffering and shame.

Dinah. I heard the sound of gentle words, which me
Drew forth; though what their import yet uncaught.

Cho. Let us approach and speak her fair for solace.
If aught in consolation we may bring
Of comfort, or in word or action given,
Behold us come; since we indeed for thee
Know sorrow at thy irksome touch of shame.

Dinah. O friends, I wished you not—come forth in
haste
If I perchance might find some ready death
To medicine my sorrows with sweet balm.

Cho. Despair not; nor such desperate means determine,
As thinking thus perhaps to heal thy pains.

But better learn to bear thy loaded sorrow,
Lest more by death be drawn, when in the grave
Shame should still cling thee, and thou miss thy aim
To scape the load thou bearest now of grief.
For not thy present sorrow deem the heaviest
That might bechance thee; since, if desperate grown
Through grief, thou take thy life, thou shalt not scape
Sharp scorn of weakness for thy facile death.
And here consider what thou rightly doest;
For, if thy sorrow thou shalt well endure,
Thou may'st o'erlive thy shame, and draw renown
For mind superior to thy sufferings borne;
But, if thou weakly yield to grief, and quit
To struggle with thy shame, thou shalt thence reap
Far worse contempt, shame, and dishonor borne.

Dinah. Such reasons fair approve; but how should I
Find solace thence for such extremest pains?
How should I once endure to lift my head,
Or gaze with forehead unabashed my friends,
After the shipwrack of my honor wrought?
How should not all who know point me with scorn
As ruined? Or how my parents not with shame
Bemoan my state? Unwedded, yet no maid,
Not virgin, yet no wife—while I should live
Hapless and scorned—a living death to think!
I in earth's universal lap would lie,
As in my mother's so to lay me down,
The cure of all my sorrows and the balm.

Cho. An evil load thou hast, I bear thee witness.
But now relate what direful chance possessed thee
And drew thy hurt; which to unburden well,
Impart to us thy anguish—as perchance
To thy relief; since griefs, once past, are sweet.

Dinah. He saw me fair; and, moved thereby to lust,
Sought me; and, when alone he found me, forced.

Cho. O heavy load thou bearest, the extreme grief!
More than we ought we know of thy sad plight,
Such hard condition. Yet, since thus is told

Thy sad relation, now in full set forth
Recital given with detail and distinct;
That we may share with thee what grief thou bearest,
If haply lightened aught thy loaded pain;
Since cure oft found in burdened woes cast forth.

Dinah. The greater woe I feel than first I felt.
What have ye asked? are ye become my foes,
That thus add grief to grief and woe to woe
For one already bowed beneath such weight,
By mention of my evils made, thus fond?
For of our sorrows think the top and crown
Is their remembrance. Though ye well intend
Toward me, perhaps misguided in your minds,
That I relax what purpose I have held
Of silence and close thoughts—so wrought I feel
By sympathy and tender love expressed.
That hour I well remember when, from home
Parting, I journeyed, innocent, alone,
Nourished with pleasant thoughts, as I walked forth
Toward the near city, where my comrades dwelt,
To visit thence the daughters of the land.
As thus I passed, and plucked what forward flowers
The season showed, filling my lap with sweet,
Wearied at length, sharp thirst upon me seized,
That me constrained to seek some pleasant draught
From mossy fountain or cool shady spring.
While thus with inexperienced quest I strayed,
And knew not whither, on a pettish rill
I chanced, that tinkled through the pleasant green;
Which following on, it led me to a cave,
Wherein it spread into a gleaming plain,
That in its glassy mirror held the sky.
Then on its brink I knelt as much in haste,
And all the gathered flowers from my lap
Let fall, as to the mossy brim I leaned.
There as I bent to look, and stooped to drink,
Another face within that gleam appeared,
Smiling to mine. As back I started straight,
Dismayed and sad, about me round were thrown
Arms of such gripe that I in vain might strive
To loose their coil. There while perplexed I lay,

Uncertain what, a calming voice I heard
That mildly spake. And, O fair flower, it said,
Deigns none to crop thy bloom and smell thy sweet?
But me no amorous reproach shall seize
That I neglect thee—so smitten with the dart
Of powerful beauty. With that he bent his head,
As to impress my cheek, with grasp relaxed,
That forth I sprang, and sought escape in flight.
But me he overtook, found swifter far;
And in embraces amorous and strong
He bore me to a mossy bed nearby
Of roses, iris blue, and violets pied.
What after chanced I cannot well relate.
As from a dream I waked, and found me laid
On that soft bed, by that still pool reclined;
But O, how glad, could I have never waked,
Or could have waked and found it but a dream!
Thence, rising, through the fields I took my steps,
And sorrowed to my father's house returned.
Thus did I lose my honor, all my shame;
But O, where may I lose what there I gained,
This burning torture, that torments me, thus
With fierce oppression seized, deflowered and fallen?

Cho. Have comfort; yet thy friends secure thou hast,
Who blame thee not, but sorrow for thy state,
Abject, insulted, wronged, dishonored, vile,
Which yet may not be cured, nor lightened aught,
If thou bereave thy life—only worse shame
Visited on thy name, extreme contempt.
Thy shame thou drew'st not on thee; none will blame
Thy hard condition as self-caused. Bethink thee,
That to thy purity no stain attaches;
Thou didst not to defilement foul consent,
Nor taste, self-moved, that sin. Thou canst but worsen
Thy honor's sad offense, not better aught,
By violent remove to scape from life.
Death ends not all. Though thou to sense wert dead,
Yet fame or shame of thee should live—and which,
Falls now within the power of thy choice.
But after death too late shalt thou repent
What choice thou hast made, if thence unwisely made,

Untimely, ere with wisdom shall consort
Thy better mind. Bethink thee here thy state.

Dinah. Your words not wise approve—have naught of
cure
To stanch my wound, which hath infixed so deep
Its hurt, that only death can medicine
My honor's seated sickness and sore harm.
All else is now past cure. Only remains
That death, by me oft-invoked, come,
Hastening the healing balm of all my pains.

Cho. Thou shalt not, while we present stand, escape
Thus from thy life, and worse distress thy wound,
Still more defile thy name; which not by us
Shall be endured—or else the worst endured
By us, thy friends and kinsmen here, who yet
Shall save thee to thyself against thy will.

Dinah. Yet thence I persevere, nor aught give o'er.

Cho. Have care; lest here thy ruin worse bechance.

Dinah. It cannot, with more sorrow on me drawn.

Cho. I fear what worse dishonor thence ensue.

Dinah. Your purpose fair intends; but, thus dis-
traught,
I cannot well bethink—so fierce my grief,
That thence the readiest way to scape I seize
Out of my pains—too faint and spent my mind,
That I should well consider what is best,
Best for all time, since now to me approves
The quickest cure as best—which death now holds.

Cho. A better mind thou hast—show'st more the
smack
Of wisdom in thy words, more with the salt
Of wise discretion savoring. For what grief
Thou on thy parents drawest, if through despair
Thou take thy life, and quite bereave their hope
Of thee, their dearest solace yet esteemed!

Be of more courage, then, nor thus deject
Thy mind to thoughts of death, but think on life,
Wherein thou mayest yet their sorrow cheer
By faithful love and care on them maintained,
Blunting in service the sharp thorn of grief,
That what thou hast thus lost thou least shalt miss.

Dinah. O that hope of respite I could find
From the spirit's hurts and pangs,
That rankling fester more
And worse infect with pains than body's wounds,
Though ulcerating with inflammation dire
Of maladies unnumbered
Which maim the apprehensive secret parts,
Torturing the corporal sense!

For the mind's wounds distress me
Distract with rankling pains,
Not less than corporal pangs,
Which yield to healing liquors that assuage
The pains of bodily sense.
But for the spirit's ill no cure, no virtuous balm,
Nor opiate syrup drugged with sense of death,
No oil of precious touch, to heal
This lingering ill of woe
That visits thus my mind.
Whence now I beg for death's benumbing balm,
With preying grief's disease quite spent and sunk,
Oppressed with grief in surfeit.

Yet hapless all I mourn, deject with grief,
Struck from the list of hope;
Hopeless my evils, found remediless
Beyond all earthly cure,
Since I no respite thence may gain
From these my vexing ills
Shown to the shame of day,
Nor from the night concealed.
Whence kindly death once more I now invoke
To hide me in the grave,
Where I might lie in sweet forgetfulness,
Of all my woes the balm.

Gho. Thy griefs distressful bring to mind
How, stirred with wrath and zeal of jealousy,
By Abraham's slack effeminacy drawn,
Sarai had dealt with Hagar, when she strove
Against her; and the inhospitable tent
Exposed her helpless, to avoid worse fate.
Yet she from threatening woes deliverance won,
Or God delivered; which like happy chance
For thee perhaps ordained,
Thus tested, and through suffering grace endued,
To release from dire afflictions.

But who is this?—since now, so wrought with grief,
I scarce have wonted sight—approaching slow
With leaden foot, and garments disarrayed,
The signs of woe. Yet now, more near discerned,
Thy mother seems; if I aright may guess,
Perhaps thus come with thee to hold
Wished converse, as with tidings new arrived,
Since in her face I see not utter woe,
But some reflex and glimmering of faint hope
To thy behoof; prepare
With her what converse thou holdest.

Dinah. Ay, in what other plight must I now stand,
Abused, maltreated, cast a prey to scorn!

Leah. Friends, for I see you such, though opiate
sorrow
Hath wellnigh drugged my sense, that scarce I know
Sleeping or waking, say if here be found
Whom thus distraught myself distraught now seek;
Or if ye aught from sight or word have gained
Of her, that hapless maiden, my lost daughter;
Who now perhaps betakes her to the shroud
Of thickest trees to hide her fearful sight
From peering day, or on some bolstering trunk
Pillows her head, fraught with o'erburdened fears.

Gho. Not farther seek; for here, though such her
change
Belief forbids, behold thy daughter sought.

Leah. O wretched sight accurst! Is this my hope

Once cherished, this my flower of youth, and pride,
My nursling, my delight?—yet now, alas!
Deflowered all beauty by a ruthless hand
That stole her maiden sweet and rifled all
Her virgin store! O, wherefore did I beg
For children, and a daughter wished receive,
More dear to me, late come, desired the more
That I might solace of her sex obtain?
For fathers in a son take first delight,
But every mother for a daughter asks,
Her solace and delight, whom she may rear,
Her tendance fond, till, bred at length to years
And wedded, she may hearten her in pain
Of children, and renew her former love
For offspring in her daughter's place obtained.
But O, what hopes I have, what thoughts are mine,
Afflicting, when I mourn thy hapless state
Defaced, deflowered, and ruined! Who will ask
Thy hand in marriage? who will wish thee joined
His wife, abhorred by all and deeply scorned?
But peace; what have I said? my grief-wrought words
Too far have run. For now befits not best
Wailing, or weak dejection, as but late
Disburdened; but this now so sudden sight
Of all thy miseries anew inflicted
Drew my fresh tears. And these good news I bring
To heal thy griefs. For thou this day art sought
For marriage, and by him who most is fit,
Who shall to thee atone for all thy wrongs.

Dinah. Think not of me such care; since I indeed
Have now no hopes to live, but only pray
For death, my chiefest cure and happiest balm.
Death, my best bridegroom and my husband best,
Shall wed me soon. Then in some lonely grave
Shall I forgotten lie and quiet sleep,
As in my mother's lap—a joy to think.

Leah. Deject not, daughter, but have better hopes
Of life and pleasure yet to come. Despair not
As thus; for thou shalt yet live down thy shame
And lift thy head; since thee no common man

Seeks now with hopes to wed, but one whom kings
Might favor to receive, a prince's son,
Honor to thee unthought. Hence now no more
Deject thy mind, but livelier hopes obtain
Of wedlock dalliance and nuptial joys,
Thy solace for the sorrows thou hast borne.

Dinah. Who thus would wed me? who so far foregone
And dead to his own shame, as to invoke
His worst undoing by ill spousals joined
With me, his constant torment and reproach,
Universal contempt and grief obtaining?
Foolhardy! who might thus no joy obtain
In wedlock dalliance, on whose offspring lights
Contamination and base shame. Thence not
By me permitted that on others placed
My burden, yet divided not, nor shared.
For woe, though halved when shared and still the more
Communicated—yet ill shame as mine
Disburdens not by lightening, but grows more
With sharing—and on her at first who bears
Presses most heavily when divided most.
No mention then be made of wedlock here
And nuptial dalliance, deemed however sweet
By me, who should inflict the greatest wrong,
The heaviest, that a husband e'er should bear.

Leah. Daughter, determine not, till thou knowest all.
For he, who seeks thee, is for thee most fit,
Who knows thee, and, as to thy sad cause of shame,
So now would reparation offer, cure
What hurts by him were done. So much hath love
For thee constrained him, that he now desires
Thy kindness and thy favor and thy love.
Reject not then these offered means, which give thee
Wished opportunity to heal thy shame
By marriage—and to whom more fit than him,
The cause of thy sad ruin and dismay?

Dinah. Mother, what outrage fresh, what living shame
Endured, wouldst thou force on me? Must I hold
Thee of my foes, pernicious to my peace,

That thus thou seekest to augment my grief
Made lasting, and thence much in horror grown?
Destroy not so my peace, wreck not my hopes
Of quiet sought. What have I done, what motioned
Toward thee, that thou my worst foe art become,
Most noxious, that mov'st thus my dearest shame?

Leah. Yet hear me, daughter. Not that I would
lessen

Or ought extenuate what offense thou hast;
But, if thou well consider, thou must take
Whatever means to save what still thou mayest,
What still may be advantaged to thy good.
Thou seest thy plight unhappy, virtue reft
And name dishonored; which thou canst not cure,
Nor aught relieve by cold repulse and hatred
Toward him, the cause of all thy harm obtained.
Bethink thee better what thou yet may'st have,
His wife; which name and station shall protect thee
From added insult, shame, indignity.
His high condition warrants what respect
Condition gives, and somewhat heals thy pride ,
Thus wounded. Only disregard not all,
All consolation not reject, that so
What thus thou hast lost thou easily shalt miss.

Dinah. Give over thy assault, thus tedious, irksome,
Aiming to win me to thy mind proposed,
And leave me, worn and weary, thus tongue-battered,
With siege of words beset, hard pressed, and girded,
That I to thee should yield, with him should live,
Enduring all that shameful chance might bring.
Sooner than such mischance, tormentive, grievous
Above the lot of men, I would the sun
Might scorch my reason, shriveled up and burned,
Or that the lightning reach an angry arm
To snatch me from a life more curst than death;
Or that the blackening whirlwind suck me up,
Then dash in pieces down, destroyed entire,
That I might perish and be never more,
Cancelled in every member, joint, and limb
Of what I was, that none had known my shame.

Leah. Be not so forward to afflict thyself,
Nor motion to thy own destruction, daughter,
What heavy ills thou bearest, only more burdened
If thy own hand shall heap upon thyself
More shame, more anguish to thy burden add,
By fond rejection made of what now offered;
Which motions to thy good, and makes for thee.
Accept his offer then, while yet is time,
Before perchance offended to depart.

Dinah. What favor at his hand could I accept,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
To such contempt, that he cannot avail
With succor to uplift me, cleanse my stain?
For so it should fall out in sad event,
That he, who most would help, should hinder most,
The best that he can give to me the worst.
This knows my ravisher, and only seeks
Yet further to afflict me with the shame
Of constant misery—ever to my sight
Present my deadliest foe and chiefest harm.

Leah. Would thou hadst hearkened, daughter, to my
words,
When I besought thee, that unhappy morn,
Not so to leave the side that gave thee birth!
But wandering desire, I know not whence,
Possessed thee. Thou hadst then persisted safe;
Not, as now, stained, deflowered, dishonored, reft
Of all thy peace, slight, wretched, miserable.
Let parents learn henceforth to shun all hopes
Of honor, reverence, respect from children,
Who early will approve to lack that faith
Which they toward their parents best should hold—
That oft, be sure, shall wreck all household peace,
And all their flowering hopes shall blast with woe.

Dinah. What blame hath trod thy lip, mother perverse,
That on me all that heavy load should light
Of censure and reproach, which thus thou loadest?
To what was done I gave not then consent,

Which might to any chance, nor touch with blame.
Was I then never from thy side to have gone,
But still at home remained, as though too weak
Of nature that I could myself have care
For what was wrong? And what couldst thou have done,
Hadst thou been there, more than myself I did?
I begged him, I implored him, to forbear,
Adjured by all the bonds of natural duty
And of religion not to blot my honor.
What could thy force have done which mine could not?
If I not then sought out the ill I took,
Neither shouldst thou upbraid me now with blame.
I heard him, and I saw him, and I ran;
And, falling at his feet, I clasped his knees,
A suppliant, and begged him as a boon
Not with disfavor and contempt returned
To treat my imploral thus of honor spared.
Beyond this, force had need; which thou, nor I,
Successfully had used, more than I used.
Blame me not then for this so hard mischance,
Which on me came invited not, nor sought.

Leah. Then hear me with changed plea, since in thy words
Much reason, and in thy thoughts more trouble stands.
Not that I like thy wedlock fortune, Dinah,
Have I assayed thee thus, and moved thee hard
To do but what remains, which thence perhaps
May remedy thy state, and thee restore
To place of wonted honor lost. Perhaps
Men will forget, and kindlier in their words
Will mention thee, of less desert insist
Thy shame, if thou thy shame shalt cover well
With discreet deed, this marriage I would join
With him who thus shall heal thy chiefest harm.
No better chance thou hast; nor canst thou choose
Herein what thou wouldst do—best then to think
That thus, since what thou wouldst thou canst not do,
Here what thou canst thou wouldst. If else thou canst,
Which herein I have failed to offer, say.

Dinah. What husband now would wish me for a wife?

Leah. The better that thou shouldst a husband have.

Dinah. A woman should conceal a woman's shame.

Leah. Rather should heal it, as in this were done.

Dinah. I cannot so refute what plea thou offerest;
But feel no less disgust and ill distaste
For what thou hast proposed, this marriage joined
With him who me hath ruined—and thence joined
Much more to shame and misery than to him
Shall e'er be joined. How with him could I live,
And him regard with reverence, who hath wronged
Against my good? yet fresh indignity
Hath added, deeper fixed the sting of shame,
By this which now from him is moved—a union,
Yet no just marriage, no true wedlock bands,
Rather the bonds of hate—such death in life
I thence with him should lead, if thus were joined.

Leah. Daughter, what is past hope is not past cure.
For, grant thy life afflicted, broken, worn
With ruin, yet of us thou still shouldst think,
Thy parents, whose thy duty is and service.
If we think here to work thy good, and gain
Advantage to thy benefit, despise not
Our counsel, nor our purpose thus forego.
Though life no pleasure show, no glad delight,
Nor even content, settled content, yet think
That we intend what best for thee, advantage
Hoped for thy good, which thus our purpose seeks.
If thou shalt slack our counsel, and shalt seize not
Occasion to thy good, which offers here,
What wilt thou? Idle on the household hearth
Burdenous to sit, afflicted, broken, tortured
The more that thou didst not the chance then grasp,
When chance presented, to appease thy wrongs.
Thus thou shalt sink to querulous old age
Outworn, and vexed that wedlock was not thine,
Blaming thy own perversity which took not
What chance for wedlock once to thee was offered.
And mourning shalt thou walk in loveless age,
Life undesired, though wont desired by all,

And death, oft prayed, found tardy in approach.
Then shalt thou truly suffer scorn, bemocked
By wives, who children bear, thence happy, honored,
Marking thy folly thus and perverse shame.
These reasons then should win thee to thy good,
Heartening thee to bear what ills thou hast,
None added, that thou more of grief shouldst bear.
But if, as seems, these win thee not, let win thee
Persuaders of more power. My tears thou seest;
Let these prevail with thee where reason could not.
Thou art my daughter, thou my darling, thou
From me hadst being. Whom shouldst thou regard
But me? whom favor? I will bring thee soon,
Where thou shalt find again thy ravished peace,
That what thou hast lost by me shall be restored.
Thus thou shalt have a husband, I a son.

Dinah. I had no thoughts to have answered thee; but
thou
Hast brought to bear reasons more powerful
Than reason, that perforce I yield. Thy tears,
More valid arguments than words, have won me
Vanquished by mastering importunity.
Do as thou wilt; thou seest it in thy hand.

Leah. I thought discretion better would instruct thee
And raise thy mind to higher thoughts, esteeming
Thy own advantage worthier, weighed in value
Of heavier scale—as this event hath proved,
Showing thee not from reason all estranged.
But I must hence, and see all things prepared
That to the happy spousal rite pertain.
Thou therefore rise, and come with me along,
That I may have thee heartened and new-clad,
To appear as best becomes a spousal bride.
Rise then and come. Thy body needs refreshment;
Refreshment after pain, food after toil,
That hath been tired all night without repose,
Wherein thou hast endured vicissitudes,
Hard changes, to the dews and damps exposed
Unsheltered, which unseemly have disordered
Thy beauty, comeliness, and maiden grace.

Dinah. No, no; it fits not that thou take such care
Of my condition. Better suit me now
These rags defiled, this base degree of shame
To which I now am sunk. Why should I seek
Ease for the body thus, not for the mind
From vexing thoughts, which gather head, that thence
Body's distress be felt not in the mind's?
And why speak'st thou of beauty, once my pride?
My beauty was my snare, provoking theft
Of what to me than beauty dearer far.
Then leave me as I am, fitly adorned
For spousals such as mine, such ornaments
And bridal trappings as may well befit
These happy nuptial rites and wedlock-bands.
A bride's best ornaments are purity,
Fair unstained honor, virgin innocence;
Which if I wear, what fault in me appears,
Arrayed as best becomes a virgin bride?
At least whate'er adornments I may have,
That may commend me in my husband's sight,
Are his bestowing, and should please him best,
Who, ere his purchase, knows his bargain got.
If he will seek me thus, and thence esteem me,
I shall have better heart to go along
With him who now my lord and head becomes.
Thus I shall have a husband, thou a son.

Leah. I see thy mind is much by passion wrought,
And desperate through grief; thou hadst not else
Disdained the wont adornments of the bride.

Dinah. Such honorable usage as I had
From him who weds me; which, if thus he like not,
Loads yet no blame on other than himself.

Leah. If thou wilt take such thought to scorn thyself,
So far forget thy honor, as to draw
New shame and scorn by such course thus untoward
To wisdom found, I care not, but will go
Where I shall other welcome find, more fit,
As suits a mother. Scorn with scorn I pay,
Folly will match with folly. So, farewell.

Cho. She's gone, as much in grief and vexed with wrath.

Dinah. So let her go, who only sought my harm
Unwisely—to my good though here intending—
And worse dishonor, by these nuptials joined.

Cho. Yet wedlock is for woman her highest state,
Her happiest, cheered by husband's love obtained,
And children's—bonds that tie her with such joy
As women most are willing to endure.

Dinah. If wedlock honorable, the sentence holds,
Where, matched with like, love hath an equal mate;
But not here, where no true affection stands—
Starved thus, and perished ere its timely birth.
Where lust hath so obtained, love cannot come.

Cho. Dark are the ways of man
And darkly endued
His purpose, from right counsels found astray,
Awry with ill, depraved
To worst abuse, which all unsought alights,
Unmerited, upon his steps,
By nets of evil closed, pent in and drawn
To lot unfortunate and shameful end;
That grief with sorrow feeds the mind
Harassed with doubts, perplexed,
Impossible to solve
The riddle hard of life.

Semi-cho. For oft on those whom God's edicts divine
Ordained in highest place,
By favor found his chosen
And special people held,
These he alike subjects to hard event,
Though dignified with honor of his choice,
Nor aught of difference weighs
Without their known default
Than on those visited whose deeds of ill
Had fitly his anger induced
And wrath well merited for impious acts,

His ministers of fierce destruction called
On them devote to ruin.

Semi-cho. Else had not fallen thy lot such evil chance
Painful, distressful, vile,
With loss of virgin shame,
That now torments thee with affliction sore
And grievous lack of honor,
With those torturing pains
Of stinging anguish fierce and vexing grief,
That pierce thus near thy heart.

Cho. But now toward us I see thy brothers tend,
As here perhaps thus come to share thy grief,
Condoling with thee what hard chance thou hast.
Prepare forthwith to receive them.

Dinah. Or this or not, with shame to me they are
come.

Levi. We come thus, sister, to bemoan thy chance,
As all who learn, and wish it had not been.
For think not on thyself all grief alights,
Though of its burden thou hast heavier share,
But also we have sorrow that afflicts us
Alike as thine; which to relieve in part,
If aught of comfort found in solace given,
Behold us come. Say therefore what now done,
That may relieve thy sorrow, raise thy mind
With grief thus found distressed and grievous hurt.

Dinah. If words might solace or beguile my wounds,
They had been cured. For I such surfeit have
Of speech intended healing, (and yet naught
Of help affording) as might well induce
Relief or cure. Yet deeds might heal my griefs.
For now my parents purpose thence to join
In wedlock thus distasteful me to him,
My ravisher, who hath destroyed my peace.
But vainly do they purpose thus, unthought.
Rather shall I endure to die, than live
With him, in that iniquitous city left,

Which knows my wrong, and shall behold my shame,
A daily torture, never-ending death,
That death itself endured before such lot
Accurst, calamitous, abject, afflicted.
Whence now from you I ask, since others fail,
Some aid in counsel or fit deed supplied,
That may with hopes present some chance to scape
This worst of miseries that my life might bear.
My life, thick-sown with griefs, I value not—
Lose rather, than preserve to such ill end.
Yet why do I complain, and show my griefs?
For so it must be—man shall woman wrong,
And woman wronged endure. Whence it shall fall,
That I shall draw out miserable days
With him, a noxious bosom-snake, entangled,
If I by self-destruction cut not off
My end—a better than with him to join.

Simeon. Peace, sister; be not o'ercome by thy evils,
But overcome thy evils with strong hopes
Of good from thence obtained, or at the least
Of some fit recompense from wrought revenge,
As suits thy outrage vile. Life is not lost;
And until that be reft despair not all,
Nor slack occasion to redress thy wrongs;
Whose satisfaction we ourselves must work,
If we would have. For I this day our father
Have with solicitation wrought, to bring
Upon our part, with wished consent obtained
Of strict revenge upon our enemies.
I have approached him, tried him, urged him hard,
Adjured by all the ties of dear relation
And of religion, duty, honor, virtue,
To join with us, or at the least forbid not,
If seeking out some opportunity
Or apt occasion found to our revenge.
But he persisted deaf, and would not hear me,
With strict refusal, dreading what might fall
From slack compliance. Hence, if we desire not
Ever such scorn to bear, contempt, such hatred,
Debased to such ill shame, our foes' derision,
We on ourselves must now depend, to gain

What wished advantage found to scape our grief.
What we should do lies not in long debate;
But how alone, and when, remain to answer.

Levi. In shrewd disasters caught behooves wise
caution,
Lest in such toils and ill-considered snares
But worse entangled—not only all revenge
Foregoing, but with serious doubt ensnared
If thence escaped—not all in folly wrecked.

Simeon. Brother, in much unequal scale thou hast
weighed
Our danger, from far other quarter fearest
Irruption, than what reason justly shows.
Our greatest peril is not that success
We fail, but that we tamely thus endure,
Without attempt, our loaded grief and shame.
Hath it escaped thee what unhappy plight
We now possess, suffering such bitter change,
Before unthought? Four days' space now is passed,
Since first our sister, innocent of ill,
Went forth to see the daughters of this land,
And in their city caught her grievous hurt
Which hath undone her, shaming us to think;
While we have thus endured without protest
Of word or action; or, if aught protested,
As though it were not. While our father, more
To heap our shame, as though enough not harmed,
Hath leagued him with the rulers of this land,
Deaf to our wishes as the shore to surge,
Passing that vile affront and outrage foul
Of maiden innocence unwilling forced,
That so hath touched us with the sting of shame;
And hath bestowed our sister as reward
On him who hath our sorrow thus induced;
Whom for our sister's sake I will not name.
And this I mention, not that I would add
To our affliction, but that I might raise thee
To temper thus heroic that will chafe
Under such insult done and shameful scorn.
What think'st thou? Wilt thou tamely thus endure,

Or art thou apt with me to some revenge
That may despoil our wrong and foil our ill,
Wreaking upon our wronger hurt unthought?
Occasion winks on opportunity,
Beckoning soon perhaps some bold attempt,
Such a discomfit as shall blank them quite
And with confusion damp their mockery.

Dinah. Leave such proposal, brother; spare the danger
Of such attempt. But let me rather mourn
My lost virginity and maiden peace,
Neglected thus, thrown into much contempt,
Or joined with him, my ravisher, to live
Days undesired, in direst misery,
Abhorred of all and shunned. What of me yet
Remains think not of so much value held
As to beguile to perilous enterprise
Those who commiserate and with me mourn.
For soon shall death, wherever found, seize on me,
Or, he not come, I in some way shall find
Escape from life thus bitter, undesired;
Content in this, if with my own I draw not
Ruin to others, in like pains cut off.
For certain is my purpose fixed to die,
Unless some satisfaction found, some forfeit,
He shall exchange, who thus hath found me, ruined me,
Destroyed, and now would worse dishonor heap
Upon my shame—yoked in such heavy yoke
Of wedlock loathsome, hateful, vile, distressed—
But added insult on my shame now fixed.
Perhaps myself shall chance on some revenge,
Or else devise, suitable to my mind,
That may convert my woes, and like bring down
Discomfit and destruction, now unthought,
On him who hath contemned and like despised
My griefs. Howe'er may chance, my presage is
That I some hard occasion to revenge
On him shall find, or shortly be at rest,
Surviving not the attempt to blot quite out
All my dishonor or my hated life.

Levi. It hath not scaped me, brother, what sore plight

Hath late possessed us, that we suffer change
Grievous to bear, and now in sad event
Liker to prove far worse than first was feared,
Of outcome ill, healing not thus what breach
Upon our honor offered. These three days
Who of us hath gone forth, or dared to show
His face? How have not all, who heard, reviled
Our lot, and cast upon us all reproach,
Our sister shamed? Yet wherein have we healed
Our diseased honor? Thou art not more apt
To point revenge, than I to follow thence.
If they will threaten war, let them have war;
Better a just war than an unjust peace.
And who besides hath blame, except ourselves,
If this despite, this hurt, unpunished scape?
Which must not be. Doubt not, but we shall find
Some plan, occasion, some consenting time,
Both to avenge our wrongs, and thence pluck down
Upon our foes like sorrow and contempt.
If we but sudden courage seize, we may
Boldly assault the ravisher in his hold,
Yet come off safe. But let not slack forbearance
Eat out the heart of shrewd intent, which urges
To enterprise us. While we speak he lives.

Simeon. With wisdom hast thou spoken. Only hence
Run not upon the worse extreme, and draw
Peril unthought from slack discretion found,
Or error—which might dash our hope secure
Of wished advantage to their ruin found.
Hence let us not slack here aught vigilance
In effort, but approve our vengeance thought
By safety to ourselves, when once obtained.
For what avails our recompense, if we
Pull down the same destruction on ourselves
As on our enemies visited with dismay?
Which must not be, but makes against our purpose.
Yet, on the other, let not slackened courage
Put us too much from venture, howe'er chanced.
Much better shall we choose to bear some risk
In effort, something close or open try,
Than she in that pernicious city left;

Whence plan or guile invented that may serve
To stir them to their peril, with such diet
In surfeit gained, as may approve their bane,
Ravening their own ruin. Whence I bethink
That in the city all their males inhabit
Yet sore from circumcision (which my care
Had pains to be effected) that affords
Occasion sly and opportunity
Of onset or adventure on them tried,
Boldly upon them come, unwarned, surprised,
Which on them may bechance with much dire ruin,
And quell their pride, who thus have sore affronted
Our honor—to our foes' dismay attempted:
Which is both victory and dread revenge.

Levi. I see thou art not slow-paced to some revenge
That may requite our harm, and us redeem
From stain of injured honor, wilt not slack
To wipe our blot of infamy. But what plan
Or scheme hast thou that may advantage here,
And rase the mark of our indignity?
Thou seest our number few; and what in might
Have we against so many, if provoked
And stirred with harm? Hence now discretion needs
With caution to our purpose entertained
Of shame and hatred in their ruin quenched.

Simeon. What plan advantaged here let opportunity
With time consent. Some chance, be sure, will rise,
Or we can find device of stratagem
Apt to our purpose. I do not fear more
Time and occasion lacking to our need
Than courage to lay hold upon occasion
And seize its forelock—bald indeed behind
It comes, and hard to grasp, but easily
May be approached before, and mastered thence.
Yet so, be sure, in nothing to induce
Our own desert in danger; for herein
That plan approves as best, which foresight takes
Of its own safety—lacking that, foregone,
As but the hazard of its own destruction.
But use we here discretion, and not passion,

To rule our counsels joined. Anger, like rain,
Breaks but itself by what it falls upon;
But wise discretion reaches its sure aim,
Yet is not gored by reflex of the stroke.
Whence, sister, thou must herein give consent,
Though unwillingly, to part with him along,
As toward the city to the marriage-feast;
Thence we shall follow, and in safest hope
Boldly upon them venture there, and slay,
Swording it through the city, till not one
Shall yet alive remain, nor tongue to boast
What ruin and confusion on thee brought.
Which shall revenge indeed, and well repay
What thou hast suffered, what reproach we bear,
And teach our enemies not much to hope
Escape, or think to shun what punishment,
If they on us indignity presume.

Levi. With deeds, not words, we mean herein to try
What our power is, or right—our clear intent
Let action speak, the loudest orator.
To cheat occasion, with the time consent.
And let it not abate us that we lack
Numbers, experience, and warlike skill.
Our vigor is the justice of our cause,
Which more avails than coats of stoutest proof;
This lacked, disarmed they fight, though locked in mail.

Simeon. But now bethink; for open lies this place,
Nor far withdrawn from sound, or close espial,
Which well betrays our speech, if any mark,
And loud disquiet. Whence retire befits
To secrecy, herein our best ally.
Thou, sister, the meantime, slight not all aids
To safety, which discretion holds. While we
Abroad shall venture forth, to enterprise
The means of thy revenge; that thou not thence
Shalt hold us slack, or froward from our aim.

Cho. What hopes of aid in this thou hast, set forth,
That we, who shared thy sorrow, share thy joy.
Since woman most a woman's trouble feels.

Dinah. Your purpose, friends, is kindly, and approves
What former care ye had for my distress.
But be not like the summer-seeming friend,
Vanishing, as the fickle flies of spring,
When threatened storm is nigh. But to my aid
Give silence and close circumspection sly,
Lest some ill-greeting failure shall attempt
Our purpose tried, converting all to ruin;
Which must not be, if we would gain revenge.

Cho. Doubt not; this much we promise thee in aid.

Dinah. Thence more to you in grateful debt I stand,
Which my sincerest joy shall recompense
When satisfied the great accompt I have
Toward him, who wrought on me this direst harm,
Ravishing thus my shame and virgin peace.

Cho. O folly! to pervert Heaven-gifted powers
With worst abuse thus to their meanest use,
Which God intends to reason should be subject,
Nor over reason evilly thus usurp!

Dinah. For on him justly is repaid the sin
Which he hath sinned, yielding with loosened lust
To an ungoverned and wild appetite,
With unthought grief in surfeit crammed and gorged.

Cho. O glorious means endued, the gift of Heaven,
As God thus late hath raised
For thy complete deliverance
Unquenchable force ordained
To quell the boisterous violence of evil men,
When, in his mighty purpose
And counsel high decreed
Upon those enemies and proud insulters
To wreak his vengeful wrath,
From ashes rousing into sudden flame,
He, all their strength and mighty feats contemning,
On them surprised, amazed,
Struck from defense,
His furious purpose sends,

Whelming them, spent and lost, thus high distract,
In the tempest of Heaven's affliction.

Semi-cho. Yet so deliverance high he oft delays,
Postpones his mighty counsel
And purpose great decreed
Upon his people held.
The trial of their patient faith esteemed
And tested fortitude,
Till suffering and endurance prove their faith
Victorious over all
The tyranny of chance may them allot,
That in the end his counsel wise appear
Upon his chosen ordained,
Whom high reward for purpose resolute
And patient fortitude must crown.

Semi-cho. Which chance on thee perhaps by God
ordained,
Thus in his purpose wise
By evil sorrows burdened
Above the lot of men;
Which yet may he avert
From thee, and thence to good
As high, as low to evil now, upraise
Thy swooning spirits depressed,
Turning thy sorrows to some hopeful end.

Cho. But now I see thy father here approach
With tardy steps—perhaps thus come to gain
Thy doubtful purpose; for with him I see
The ruiner of thy state, who such annoy
To thee hath wrought, yet now perhaps would seek
Forgiveness, and move pardon for his fault.
His action bears remorse, his mien repentance.
What his intent may chance, we now shall learn.

Dinah. Or thus or not, alike to me they come.

Jacob. With hesitating thoughts and doubtful purpose,
As moved herein by thy affliction, daughter,
I come with hopes of benefit accomplished
Perhaps to thee; and with me I have brought

Whom thus thou seest, who now desires to join thee
His wife. Which comfortable hope affords
To thy desired relief. Whence hear him speak.

Dinah. His wife? my ruin! let him not approach me!

Shechem. With doubtful hopes and lagging resolution,
Dinah, I come, still fearful of thy hatred,
Which I have justly drawn by my own act,
Meriting well thy fierce displeasure heaped
Upon my fault, which I could wish not done,
So ill the consequence to thee derived.
But powerful love hath thus to thee impelled me,
Once more to see thy face and view thy state,
Which now thus sad I see, and like repine
Thy hard condition. This hath moved me then,
(For so of thee had come such ill report)
With hopes of reparation made perhaps
For my too hasty deed. Whence now proposed
This honorable marriage with thee joined—
As to thy parents thou know'st late was moved—
(Nor all unwillingly by thee deemed heard)
Which may perhaps redeem thy forfeit state
And thee in former place of honor set—
Tardy amends, yet all within my power
Of satisfaction for my rash misdeed.

Dinah. To salve my honor I could better choose
My choice, than thee—thus brutish, bestial, lustful,
My outrage who with cruelty hast wrought.

Shechem. Bid me not thus despair; but in thy face,
Wherein the heaven of mercy I behold,
Let glimpses of some happier fortune shine.

Dinah. What ear thou gavest to my prayers, when I
Besought thee not with ruin thus to harm me
And force my maiden fortress, give I thine.

Shechem. Repulse me not thus, Dinah; but still hear
me,
While I to thee such forceful plea shall move,
So powerful, weighty, pleasing, as may well

Convince thee that I then no harm intended—
By gusty passion hurried to that deed—
And now to thee motion what highest good
I unto thee may offer, with intent
To salve thy wounded hurt, and quite redeem
The blot thy name hath taken with foul stain.

Dinah. Hence from my sight, thou serpent, that hath
stung

With poisonous tooth my honor, whose dire hurt
No balm or healing cure may medicine,
That e'er it show as fair as then it showed
Ere thee I saw, my lecherous ravisher,
My dearest enemy, my direst harm,
Who ruined me—seek'st but to ruin more,
Upon whom shall contempt and hatred sit
Throughout all time, defamed with evil shame
Of maiden honor ravished, virgin peace,
Which hath exposed me to such chilling hatred
Of those who hear—pointed with all contempt
And hateful scorn. Boast of thy venom foul,
That hath polluted me, and stained my name
With such dishonor, with such blot accurst;
But think not thus to charm me to my harm
With cunning spell of words; thy double tongue
On me can have no power, its strength is nulled,
That I should mind thee, or to thee give ear—
Yet worse esteemed, debased, abhorred, and vile,
If I endure to pass thy heinous crime,
And gloss it with the added stain of wife
To thee conjoined—wilful dishonor done
To my own self by my own hand, thence worse
Than what thou hast done, as though I had consented
In what thou hast done, which me hath so undone.
Thus much from thee of serpent I have gained,
That I am deaf to these thy sweet persuasions,
Stopping my ear to all thy flatteries.

Shechem. Let me but touch thy hand in sign of par-
don.

Dinah. Take not possession of me by a look.
No; ravish other virgins for thy wives,

Who glory in such shame, but think not me
Ever to draw to such defilement foul,
With bait of honeyed words beguiled to folly,
Dishonor, which should prove my chiefest shame,
And which I intend on me not thus is done.
If in my flower of beauty, when all admired me,
Loved, cherished me, respected, sought me, served me,
Thou only couldst condemn me and despise me,
Force me to hard condition, last insult me,
Pretending by thy love for me compelled
To do what thou hast done, if thou couldst this,
How wouldst thou soon my trampled beauty scorn,
How slight, disfavor! How wouldst thou insult me,
Exult upon me, scorn me, hate, neglect me,
Taunting me with the stain of virgin name
Defaced, deflowered, thence cheap by thee esteemed!
Yet now to pity wouldst thou make pretense,
And softened heart! No pity could make tender
Thy calloused heart! Thy shifts and feigned devices
Open appear, and show thy love how false.
I see thee, serpent, what thou art—a heart
Treacherous as hard, the snake beneath the rock.
What peace with thee were found, what pleasure, honor,
Who sought me out, since fair, then cruelly robbed me,
At time when life went most with joy be found,
Of all my honor, virtue, virgin peace
Violated, then thrust me forth despoiled,
Naked of innocence, of hope, of good
Reft, and ashamed before my enemy?
Think not that aught shall ever tempt my feet,
That I should enter in thy doors, a wife
Thus wronged, insulted, shamed, dishonored, scorned,
Visited with contempt, the worst disgrace
With evil that my life could e'er befall.

Shechem. Yet hear me speak, nor causelessly reject
My offered sorrow for my deed misdone,
Which cannot now undo. Hence but remains
To seek what means may heal thy hurt, and thee
Restore to place of honor, set thee high
In all men's sight. Be not, as thy great shame
Constrains thee now, stubborn as steel, austere,

Set on revengeful spite, severe in thoughts
Toward him who loves thee and would now repair
The damage to thy name, unweeting wrought—
Rigorous for my default, but rather learn
What cure may best thy sore hurts now avail
With healing, mindless all of what is past,
That what I reft thou easily shalt spare.

Dinah. Out, jackal, out! who didst not then relent
To leave thy horrid purpose, when thou forced'st me
To act of lust distasteful, scandalous,
Pernicious to my honor! What had love
In thee, or how thy purpose aught impelled,
When thou didst thus constrain me to thy wish,
Rifling my virgin store? But love thou call'st it,
The urging and impulse of powerful love!
Thy lust it was, thy lecherous lust it was,
That made me—what I am—which hath no name,
Thus beneath all contempt reduced, below
All shame, disgust, and loathing. Is it now love,
Is it now love become, thy plea thus changed,
That I should like it more than when it robbed
Me of my peace, destroyed my honor, left me
A target to the constant dart of scorn?
But love thou hast degraded with such name
Affixed to lust thus hateful. Love seeks love;
Not with rank violation and hot shame,
The hateful and unholy use of lust,
But with just honor paid and jealous awe
Upon its object guarded with due care
From harm betided—not, as thou hast done,
Working to raise inexpiable contempt,
Knowing, as needs thou should, so disregarding
The honor due to love. Still canst thou plead
That love impelled thee, urged thee, forced thee on?
For, had thy love been, as it ought, sincere,
It would have taught thee other, other deeds
Would have brought forth, than insult to the honor
And name of virgin, as thou here hast done.
Yet now wouldst cloak thy deed, veil it, thus foul,
With the fair guise of love! How wilt thou here
Varnish thy plea, that bare in guilt thus shows?

Shechem. Yet hear me, Dinah; not that I excuse
My fault, or value less thy ill received,
That great offense from me, but that I still
Have heart to move such plea, as moved before,
Of love to thee constraining (though I took
Manner unkind to manifest my love)
Humbly with penitence and pardon sought,
That thou mayest know how much I now repent
My sad misdoing, when, I know not whence,
Such impulse mad and fierce desire possessed me
To taste thee and enjoy thee, found by chance,
Unknown, whom I, by sudden passion forced,
The effect of love working some violent way,
Constrained thus to my liking and thy hurt.
And then I knew thee not—for, had I known thee,
Be sure some way I had found out to know
Thy parents, and from them in haste desired
Thee as my wife, in wedlock fair conjoined.
Must it be then my punishment determined,
That, when I now have found thee and have gained
Thy parents to my wish, I thence must lose thee,
To lose thee when I scarce had rightly found thee,
Foregoing in thee all delight, once hoped,
All converse, that I might to thee display
My sorrow and regret for what I did,
Thy ruin, which hath also drawn my pain,
My sorrow—which I did not so intend,
Impelled by passion mad and blind desire,
That thus hath wrought thy ruin and reproach,
If to my purpose thou not willing yield?
Forego then what intent thou hast of hatred
And distance toward me; let me find some way,
Though late, to recompense, what in my power,
The great harm on thee I am charged to have done.

Dinah. Since thou art minded thus to recompense
Thy harm on me, no better way I know
Than to give o'er thy seeking, thus through love
Impelling, to this act now motioning on,
As thou averrest. If love be thy object,
Love to thyself, as love from self thou givest,
Elsewhere, another woman for thy wife

Seek out, not me, who ne'er toward thee can know
The love thou seekest. Should I now accept
Thy plea as true of love toward me impelling
When thou didst what thou didst, that could not raise
Love toward thyself in me, nor aught abate
What hate toward thee I hold. The wont effect
Of hatred and of hateful deeds is hate,
Not love, not honor for dishonor, reverence
For shame, not liking for dislike, distaste.
A harvest like thy seed thou shouldst expect.
Sow love, thou shalt reap love; sow hate and scorn,
Then scorn thou garnerest, scorn, repulse, and hate.
Thou wouldst not think in wedlock fair to join,
Or wish thy wife, one so pernicious found,
Destructive, to thy peace, reminding thee
Thy constant shame—which most should work thy shame.
Thou must with other plea attempt my mind,
More consonant with reason, more adjudged
To soothe discretion, than what now thou hast,
Contrary to all kindness, reason, justice,
Or favor, by this plea but outraged worse.
Approve thy plea with reason, that my reason
Thence may approve thy plea; which reason is.

Shechem. Then further hear me. Since love moves
thee not,
Love, held the highest aim of human life,
Rigorous of sway in human hearts, and most
Of force adjudged in woman, who loves most
And most for love will venture, then let move thee
Motive more valid deemed to reason found,
More apt, that thence thy reason may approve.
Though thou hast scorned my love, and treated thence
With harsh neglect, against life's canon law,
(For to be loved is sure the first delight—
To love, not less) yet reason thou mayest not
So readily, if it consort with prudence,
With wisdom, skill, discretion. For but think,
If love be not admitted, nor considered,
As to the mind distasteful, offered thus,
What still may be accomplished, what still done,
To lighten what thou bearest, satisfying,

With what amends I have, thy loaded shame.
Thou shalt not wisely disregard my words
As idle judged, vexatious, futile, fond.
First, as it was my weakness, not thy sin,
I on myself all blame transfer, and beg
What time and opportunity may offer
To make amends for what I have misdome,
Misguided. Then, since once the deed is done
Beyond undoing, whether good or ill,
Thou mayest not alter, nor to change contrive
(Since done none can undo, nor past recall),
What can it still avail that thou shouldst bear
So sensibly as not such reparation
Offered to accept?—deemed only madness then
Idly to mourn thy heavy chance, nor change
What in thy power now shows. Though thou shouldst
rain
Rivers of tears, thou canst not wash thy grief.
Let us leave what is past—as known past cure,
So past bewailing known—and to the present
Entrust our joy, mindless of what is done,
And hopeful what the future holds in store.
If reason, not love, induced thee to reject,
As fond, what offer tendered late by love,
Let reason, not love, now move thee to accept
What for thy name recovered reason offers.

Jacob. Daughter, if tender love toward thee may
venture
Thus far, and not reap sole repulse and scorn,
Like, if thou canst, this offer, since the best
That now is hoped, nor fondly thus reject
What tendered good thou seest; perhaps withdrawn,
If thou despitely mistreat with scorn.

Shechem. I know not how my words may be received,
If further ventured; but discretion still
For thee obtains, if thou stop not thy ear
Now to her voice. Though thou hast many wrongs
And grievous, heavy, hard indeed to bear,
Wrong not thyself still worse by proud rejection
Had to my suit, that offers thee thy name

And fame recovered ; nor, as now thou showest,
Be thus contemptuous, proud, austere as steel,
Rigorous for my offense, but rather choose
What cure may best avail to close thy wounds ;
That thou mayest, if in mercy not excel,
In prudence and in wise discretion so.

Dinah. The view of thee doth still offend my eyes
With blasting sight ! O that the piercing thorn
Of painful blindness might destroy that sense,
That I might never see thee more, once seen
To my destruction, whom I now must see
Both day and night—a horror but to think !
Yet, worse, shall thee embrace, my husband, deemed
The partner of my heart, and solace dear !
O place, wherein I lost my virtuous shame
And virgin honor, must I then consent
To see, and not once only, but through life,
That darkest spot accurst, wherein I lost
Both name and virgin blame, and with him live,
My ravisher, the ruin of my peace ?
Yet now who proffers peace, unthinking aught
What horror stands between us, what disgust,
Our firstborn offspring, gendered and conceived
In lust, inbred by hate, before their time
In loathing now delivered and in shame,
That sharp distaste shall still possess us linked
As to a lewd and loathly corpse of death.
Much gladlier would I die than live with him,
My ravisher, who bred my quickening shame,
The sight of whom shall vex me day by day,
A life's long dying to augment my grief,
A lifelong death. Yet what avail my words ?
Since death, who sets all free with glad release,
Shall here be foiled, for still my shame shall live,
Though I be dead, my fair inheritance
And monument that shall forever stand.
Living or dying then, what succor found,
Or solace to my hopes, that I should scape
Shame, my tormentor, that thus suffers not
My anguish to assuage, or thoughts to rest ?
This lingering fever, this disease of shame,

Which in my body lurks and banishes
The sense of peace, in me must ever live.
O virgin spousal bed, which I had hopes
One day I should possess, and there enjoy
Embrace of him, my solace and delight,
Whom I could love; and thence with joy bring forth
Fair beauteous offspring chaste, to whom should cling
No shame, as from a mother bad derives!
What dowry shall I bring ye, daughters! sons,
Fair heritage your mother now bestows!
But go I must; and what avails to mourn?

Cho. O wretched chance thou fallest upon,
Dinah, with woes endued
Above the lot of men!
Which that thou shalt endure, may God afford
Patience and helpful grace,
Heartening thee to endure what ills thou bearest,
That thou mayst conquer all
The tyranny of shame on thee allots,
And last be numbered found of those
Whom patience gloriously shall crown;
Since in the hand of God the issue lies.

Jacob. O friends, small hope of consolation here
May seem, or solace—such unhappy chance
Hath seized my child, and in me now begets
Dire grief, plucking from me that pleasing hope
In her perhaps to have received some surety
Of honor all unwonted on me found—
Return unsuitable adjudged from God
For so much faith that trusted thus in all.
Who now could pray for children, valuing
The stain of barrenness as a reproach,
Or curse of God, when sorrows such as mine
May seize a parent and depress with grief?
Or are such gifts, desirable appearing,
Only of doubtful good, and offered thus
To tempt our wishful prayers, but draw a sting,
Sharp as a serpent's tooth, to wound the mind?
Alas, not so to me as good appears
That whom God's choice hath chosen thus and reared

To grace and favor, should be thus o'erwhelmed,
Be it but for sake of former honor given!

Cho. Deject not utterly; nor thus arraign
God's providence, and Heavenly disposition,
Which yet perhaps may turn the works of men,
Though evil now appearing, to some good,
Working herein the trial of thy faith
With richer grace bestowed, when from such ill
God shall ordain on thee some benefit,
Returning for thy evil certain good.
For God, who thee hath chosen and ordained
To such high state, such honor, can as easily
Ordain, to recompense the ill thou hast,
Some glorious guerdon of exceeding faith,
Visiting thy affliction and sore pain
With marvelous healing, found thy hopeful balm.
His mighty power we know, and him can like
Accredit on his people purpose high,
(For whom, if not on us, his favor set?)
The Holy One of Heaven, and our God.

Jacob. Thy words not yet avail to raise my trust;
For, oh, how different now my hopes portend
Than what they late possessed, when high in thoughts
Magnanimous I stood, secure of ill,
By proof beyond all doubts thus high inflamed!
Yet now, alas, despised, abject, and gazed,
Made to all men a mock and deepest scorn,
Forsaken, left of God, by him esteemed
Thence to such glorious mission high upraised!
Who envies now my lot, or thus could live
Hopeless of future, that me now presents
Life undesirable, laborious days
Of toilsome thought, myself thus all contemned
Hopeless, unpitied, hated, and disprized?
Why could not death, acceptable death, have come
To snatch her hence, ere thus upon her fallen
Such burdenous ill unthought, the worst of grief
That human life with misery might bear?

Cho. Lament not thus; nor, all in doubts, afflict thee

With impious thoughts of sin unpunished done.
For God hath not entirely left, nor all
Suitable vengeance passed, as paid entire
Those who have thus his precepts foully mocked,
But still shall visit with affliction grievous
And direful, as may best befit his care,
Such foul dishonor to his chosen offered.
Against God also, not against thee alone,
Have they presumed, who to their hurt shall find
Doubtless swift vengeance visited upon them
And wrath of Heaven, who their own ruin invoked.
For God, who thee upheld with heavenly strength
When once at Peniel all night thou strovest,
There wrestling with the angel, can as easy
Uphold and strengthen in thy trial hard,
If thou believe him better than thou hast.
And I persuade me more, because of old
Thou wert his chosen, who with hand not slack
Can still sustain thee thence by heavenly grace.
Whence share with us what hopes we now obtain
With good success to reach complete revenge,
Visiting them with vengeance, as befits,
Who our despite have wreaked and shameful harm.
Thy sons, (for so in purpose late they stood
With us) by sharp desire to satisfy
For her, and ample vengeance wreak for loss
Of virgin peace thus wrecked, have parted late,
Bound thus obscure that none perhaps might mark
And frustrate thus their secret purpose set,
Satisfaction for such outrage vile to seek.
What if by this they have passed, and soon shall gain
Such ample retribution as may well
Cancel those hopes thus vile and dash their thoughts,
Who impiously presumed indignity
Upon God's chosen, to their harm presumed,
Their own destruction thence and ruin drawn?

Jacob. O folly and shame! That they should thus
presume,
My sons, usurping, set on rebellious spite,
Against my right, thence drawing their own harm,
Yet, worse, of me, and all, when, thus provoked,

Our foes on us shall recompense exact
For oath thus violated and slack faith!
Why have I thus bemoaned as ill that lot
I had obtained, since now much worse appears
Danger which threatens, that the lesser evil
I feel not, by the greater thus infixed?
But let me hence, if warned in time perhaps
Those with whom late in league I joined, that thence
Haply they may escape the snare, and thus
On me stick no reproach for slackened faith.
What they had done deserved no such return
After close league in amity thus joined,
Nor me excuses that I now should warn
What danger, all unthought, on them impends.
For, where such warranty and oath conjoin,
True faith should like conjoin, nor thus permit
Duty to slack, or care, as here were done.

Cho. Yet stay; for hither speeding to our place
I see who may report our state with news.

Mes. O sight, which late these eyes with dread beheld,
And still behold, so lively yet I see,
By fancy or imagination fixed
Still on my mind that sight, though loathing much!
Yet not so, but that accident or chance
Hath led me hither, or the guess of instinct,
To ye, so much thus in the news concerned.

Jacob. Or good or bad thy tidings, speak them out.

Mes. Good to whom good; which here not all may
boast.

Jacob. Yet still set forth thy news; which, good or
bad,
Come not too soon; for still the worst endured,
Until relation clear ends apprehension.

Mes. Shechem, and all who wrought thy daughter's
harm,
Are overthrown, in ruin whelmed and fallen.

Jacob. What punishment upon him was exacted,
Adjudged thus guilty, worthy not to scape?

Mes. Just punishment and right, nor aught extenuate.
The dark and lecherous deed, which there he wrought,
Cost him his life.

Jacob. O heavy satisfaction
Upon his sin exacted to his harm!
One question else remains—say at whose hand.

Mes. Thy sons have recompensed her direful harm.

Jacob. But how done thus? put forth the full relation,
Tidings thus more particular and distinct.

Mes. Hither from Shalem come I, wherein dwelt
He who had wrought thy daughter's ruinous harm.
There as my task I sped, following a beast
Stolen from the flock, some little time I passed,
Ere I had quite dispatched; when sudden rose
Rumor of tumult, that with noise aroused
Each byway and high street. Soon I beheld
Where through the streets approached some bridal train,
That wont with glad disorder pass along—
But passed not gladly here, such uproar wild
Threatening arose, as well might ruin all,
Not suiting nuptial time and marriage-feast.
There as I nearer drew, I found the bride
(And so, ere I arrived, from some I gained)
Not else than that sad virgin, thy wronged daughter.
She, with distressful plight, and fearful tears
That ceased not flowing, passed along the streets,
Matter of gaze and scorn, with foul abuse
Exclaimed upon each side, as well might draw
Resentment, if aught friendly to her stood.
And so it chanced; for soon a voice was heard
Much moved, by passionate wrath as far distressed:
Why do ye thus presume beyond the bounds
Of hospitality, that ye so bemock
One thus unfortunate, whose distressful plight
Might pity better draw and courteous silence,

As fits a woman solitary in grief,
Raising compassionate ruth for sad mischance?
Whereto with impudence was thus returned:
Who art thou that inquirest thus our right
To do as now? Know that thy thought concern
Hath here no place, for not thy bride we deem
The woman is, nor haply of thy tribe.
To mix with our concerns thou wert best forbear,
Nor draw upon thyself perchance what anger
Provoked thou seest; better love thy life.
So spake they, as to height of fury raised,
Surveying him who thus had dared presume
To that bold deed, vouched with a speech thus bold.
Whereat thy sons, for so I then perceived
Simeon and Levi, waited not, but set
Upon them, with what weapons there by chance,
Or haply to this purpose with them found.
Whom when among, they with such fury smote
Upon them, that they might not well withstand
So sudden onset, but to flight they turned,
Struck from their boastful hope, bereft, and fallen.
After whom slain, these stayed not yet their wrath,
Swording it through the city, where by chance,
Within doors or without, in flower of youth
Or crowned with wintry age—none able aught
Of opposition—till, of all there found
In manhood, none alive remained, o'ercome
And quite destroyed by such avenging wrath.
Then, after that dire slaughter, which had slain
Their city's prime in manhood and the flower,
Youth, or old age, or child, in death not spared,
With all of common sort, and thereto joined
Him who had wrought so grievous harm, the proud
Insulter, cause of all their wrath provoked
By such indignity and dishonor foul,
They took forthwith their sister and escaped.
Wherein if to our foes be aught of joy,
Let them rejoice indeed and gratulate.

Cho. O Heaven-ordained revenge victorious!
On those insulters proud in scorn
Fully avenged with grievous foil

Amplly repaid, their high-built pride
Tumbled with shock;
Which ruined their hopes and dashed their thoughts,
Who only meant our harm, yet reaped
Anger and insult dread
Upon them ensnared,
In the fatal fold self-tangled!

When their hearts were uplifted, high in scorn,
Jocund with mockery, drunk with pride
And surfeit of laughter deep ingorged,
Sudden upon them struck
Dire madness, by them induced
Unthought, which only drew
Speedy destruction and death upon them come
Who thought our wrong,
Yet contrary proved
The snare of ruin upon them.

For these, though all disprized,
Contemned, and held diminished, slight,
From under embers roused their vigor's sudden blaze;
And as a leopard came, which hunger drives
Upon the flocks in wattled cotes at eve
When shepherds sleep secure, but as a lion
Their fiery virtue fell,
Sudden as clap of thunder from clear sky!
So fell their foes; but these, as Virtue's self,
Most active roused when seeming most depressed,
Revived their courage hid,
And on their enemies, who them despised,
Smote like a tempest, when the quarterd winds
Rush forth, and vex the woods. So fell their foes;
But these, from great emprise,
Return with joy and glad elation high,
After the slaughter of their foes amazed,
Stricken from all defense, on whom o'erwhelmed
God hath fulfilled his errand of affliction.

But hold; for now the storm draws on apace.

Jacob. The day hath promised fair, nor yet portends.

Cho. Another kind of tempest threatens now.

Jacob. Unjoint thy speech perplexed; no riddle needs.

Cho. The riddle is resolved ; thy sons draw nigh.

Jacob. Why have ye, sons, thus motioned to my hurt
And yours, by this ill deed that shall corrupt
My name among these heathen and profane?
Was there no right on you by me presumed,
That ye should venture thus beyond your due,
Done in this deed, usurping to yourselves,
And arrogating my due place supposed?

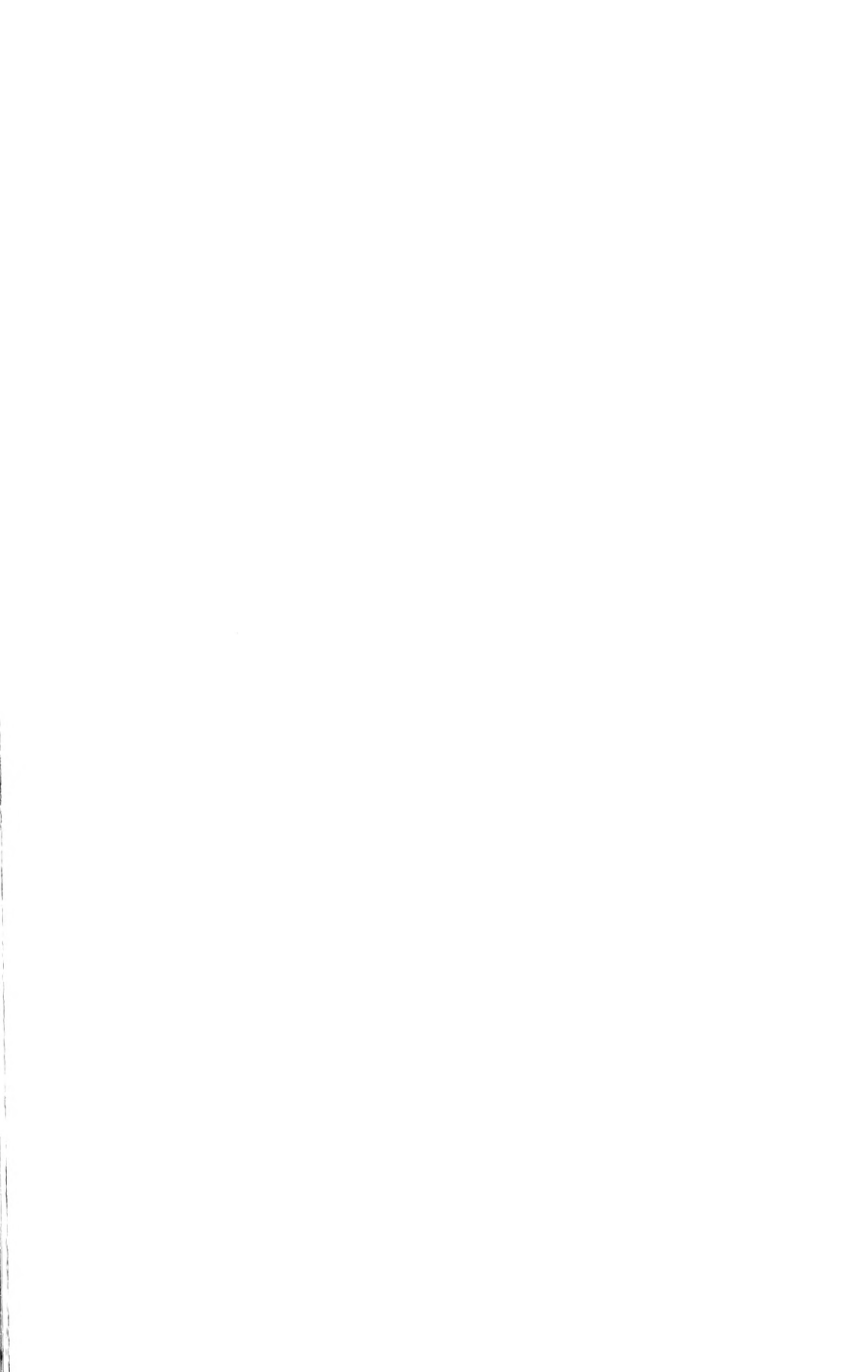
Simeon. We have done what we have done, motioning
to good,
Thereto set on by God, purposed to do,
His instruments, what punishment ordained
Upon those evil, heathen, treacherous, vile,
That guilt of their own ruin thence had drawn.
And herein do we but our deed approve
That vengeance sore hath dealt on him, the proud
Insulter. For should he thus basely scape,
Who with our sister hath presumed to deal
As with a harlot? Thus in this we erred not,
But better are approved. Who could endure
Such treacherous blot to family and God,
Indignity to honor and religion,
Joined with idolaters, the head of shame?
If thou, her father, couldst not feel such insult,
And thence resent it with more strenuous anger,
We at the least could, and could like avenge it.
Thy slackness hath relaxed our bond of duty
Toward thee, and justified our vengeful deed,
As but a holy ill and pious wrong.
All of them then were slain—he, who had spoiled
Our sister's honor, to avenge our quarrel;
The other only to assure our safety
Was done, lest thence on us perhaps induced
Danger unthought, with ruin unsuspected,
Yet none the less pernicious to our lives
From these who had wrought our ruin thus and shame.

Jacob. What consequence from this rash act may draw
Condemns the deed. Why should I be contemned
As a league-breaker, worthy death adjudged,
Which these shall visit on me for my faith

Unfaithful, unregarded, unobserved?
Had I no power herein, and ye no duty,
That ye with disobedience have usurped
My office known, a stench upon my name
Thus bringing with contempt, that Canaan's sons
Cast blame on me for disregarded oath,
Broken my plighted faith and duty sworn,
That I have infamy upon my name
Denounced, a breaker of just oath and faith?
And do ye thus with sober brow approve it,
Glossing it with religion's holy name—
A deed thus vile, unholy, irreligious,
Against the laws of God and laws of nations
So to disrupt a sacred peace thus joined?
Curst is the deed for your sakes! Ye in sorrow
Shall bear that weight all the days of your lives!

Levi. Father, we are not careful to observe
Thy reverence, where a higher duty claims
Upon us, that the mark of infamy,
Such foul dishonor stuck upon our front,
Be cleansed, and cleared our stain. For they themselves
Drew their own hurt, with base dishonor done
And rape of virgin, taking stain of crime
Unnatural, inhospitable performed,
From whence indignity and sister's shame.

Cho. Fair in its end, though oft with doubt,
Hath closed this day, wherein was seen
God's trial of his chosen found,
With Heavenly endurance upheld
Of wisdom high, that sore hath visited
Discomfit and fierce vengeance on his foes;
But on his people hath allotted thence
Favor, and recompense for insult high
Upon them presumed,
With release from sore affliction.









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